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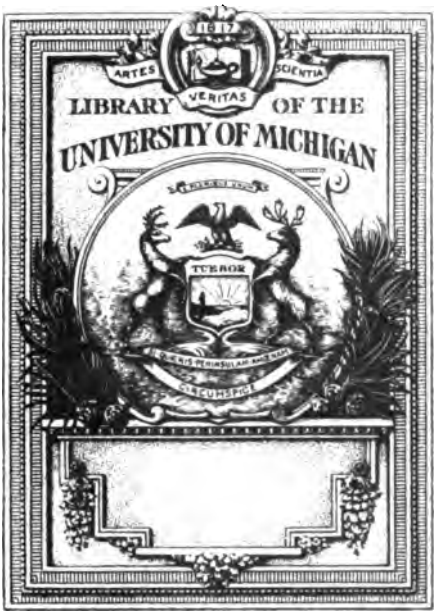

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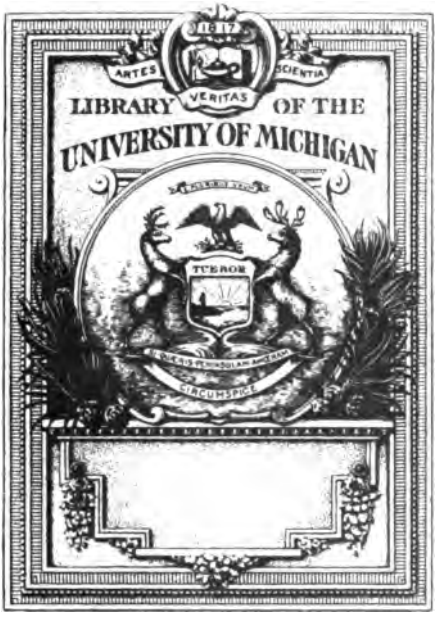

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STRAP IS OVERWHELMED WITH JOY

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STRAP IS OVERWHELMED WITH JOY

"*Lord have mercy upon us! what a vast treasure is here!*"

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IN the morning before I got up, Strap came into my chamber, and, finding me awake, hemmed several times, scratched his head, cast his eyes upon the ground, and, with a very foolish kind of simper upon his face, gave me to understand he had something to communicate. "By your countenance," said I, "I expect to hear good tidings." "Indifferent," replied he, tittering; "that is, here after as it shall be. You must know I have some thoughts of altering my condition." "What!" cried

I, astonished, "a matrimonial scheme? O rare Strap! thou hast got the heels of me at last." "N'— no less, I assure you," said he, bursting into a laugh of self-approbation; "a tallow-chandler's widow, that lives hard by, has taken a liking to me — a fine jolly dame, as plump as a partridge. She has a well-furnished house, a brisk trade, and a good deal of the ready. I may have her for the asking. She told a friend of mine, a brother footman, that she would take me out of a stinking clout. But I refused to give my final answer, till I knew your opinion of the matter." I congratulated Monsieur d'Estrapes upon his conquest, and approved of the scheme, provided he could be assured of those circumstances of her fortune; but advised him to do nothing rashly, and give me an opportunity of seeing the lady before matters should be brought to a conclusion. He assured me he would do nothing without my consent and approbation, and that very morning, while I was at breakfast, introduced his inamorata to my acquaintance. She was a short thick woman, about the age of thirty-six, and had a particular prominence of belly, which I perceived at first sight, not without some suspicion of foul play. I desired her, however, to sit, and treated her with a dish of tea; the discourse turned upon the good qualities of Strap, whom I represented as a prodigy of sobriety, industry, and virtue. — When she took her leave, he followed her to the door, and returned licking his lips, and asked if I did not think she was a luscious creature. I made no mystery of my apprehension, but declared my sentiments of her without reserve; at

which he was not surprised, telling me he had observed the same symptom, but had been informed by his friend that she was only liver-grown, and would in a few months be as small in the waist as ever. "Yes," said I, "a few weeks I believe will do the business. In short, Strap, it is my opinion, that you are egregiously imposed upon; and that this friend is no other than a rascal who wants to palm his trull upon you for a wife, that he may at once deliver himself from the importunities of the mother, and the expense of her bantling; for which reason I would not have you trust implicitly to the report he makes of her wealth, which is inconsistent with his behaviour; nor run your head precipitately into a noose, that you may afterwards wish exchanged for the hangman's." He seemed very much startled at my insinuation, and promised to look twice before he leaped; saying, with some heat, "Odds, if I find his intention is to betray me, we shall see which of us is the better man." My prediction was verified in less than a fortnight; her great belly producing an infant, to the unspeakable amazement of Strap, who was, before this happened, inclinable to believe I had refined a little too much in my penetration. His false friend disappeared; and in a few days after an execution was issued against her goods and household furniture, which were seized by the creditors.

Meanwhile I met my friend Banter at the ordinary, and in the evening went to the opera with him and Mr. Chatter, who pointed out Melinda in one of the boxes, and offered to introduce me to her, observing at the same time, that she was a reigning toast worth

ten thousand pounds. This piece of information made my heart bound with joy, and I discovered great eagerness to accept the proposal; upon which he assured me I should dance with her at the next assembly, if he had any influence in that quarter. So saying, he went round, spoke to her some minutes, and, as I imagined, pointed at me; then returning, told me, to my inexpressible pleasure, that I might depend upon what he had promised, for she was now engaged as my partner. Banter, in a whisper, gave me to understand, that she was an incorrigible coquette, who would grant the same favour to any young fellow in England of a tolerable appearance, merely to engage him among the herd of her admirers, that she might have the pleasure of seeing them daily increase; that she was of a cold, insensible disposition, dead to every passion but vanity, and so blind to merit, that he would lay any wager the wealthiest fool should carry her at last. I attributed a good deal of this intelligence to the satirical turn of my friend, or resentment for having himself suffered a rebuff from the lady in question; and, at any rate, trusted so much to my own accomplishments, as to believe no woman could resist the ardour of my addresses.

Full of this confidence I repaired to Hampstead, in company with Billy Chatter, my Lord Hobble, and Doctor Wagtail. There I saw a very brilliant assembly, before whom I had the honour to walk a minuet with Melinda, who charmed me with her frank manner and easiness of behaviour. Before the country dances began, I received a message, by a person I

did not know, from Bragwell, who was present, importing that nobody who knew him presumed to dance with Melinda, while he was there in person; and that I would do well to relinquish her without noise, because he had a mind to lead up a country dance with her. This extraordinary intimation, which was delivered in the lady's hearing, did not at all discompose me, who by this time was pretty well acquainted with the character of my rival. I therefore, without the least symptom of concern, bade the gentleman tell Mr. Bragwell, that, since I was so happy as to obtain the lady's consent, I should not be solicitous about his; and desired the bearer himself to bring me no such impertinent messages for the future. Melinda affected a sort of confusion, and pretended to wonder that Mr. Bragwell should give himself such liberties with regard to her, who had no manner of connexion with the fellow. I laid hold of this opportunity to display my valour, and offered to call him to account for his insolence, a proposal which she absolutely refused, under pretence of consulting my safety; though I could perceive by the sparkling of her eyes, that she would not have thought herself affronted in being the subject of a duel. I was by no means pleased with this discovery of her thoughts, which not only argued the most unjustifiable vanity, but likewise the most barbarous indifference; however, I was allured by her fortune, and resolved to gratify her pride, in making her the occasion of a public quarrel between me and Bragwell, who, I was pretty certain, would never drive matters to a dangerous extremity.

While we danced together, I observed this formidable rival at one end of the room, encircled with a cluster of beaux, to whom he talked with great vehemence, casting many big looks at me, from time to time: I guessed the subject of his discourse, and as soon as I had handed my partner to her seat, strutted up to the place where he stood, and cocking my hat in his face, demanded aloud if he had anything to say to me. He answered with a sullen tone, "Nothing at present, sir;" and turned about upon his heel. "Well," said I, "you know where I am to be found at any time." His companions stared at one another, and I returned to the lady, whose features brightened at my approach, and immediately a whisper ran through the whole room; after which so many eyes were turned upon me, that I was ready to sink with confusion. When the ball broke up, I led her to her coach, and, like a true French gallant, would have got up behind it, in order to protect her from violence on the road; but she absolutely refused my offer, and expressed her concern that there was not an empty seat for me within the vehicle.

Next day in the afternoon, I waited on her at her lodgings, by permission, in company with Chatter, and was very civilly received by her mother, with whom she lived; there were a good many fashionable people present, chiefly young fellows, and immediately after tea, a couple of card tables were set, at one of which I had the honour to play with Melinda, who, in less than three hours, made shift to plunder me of eight guineas. I was well enough content to lose a little money with a good grace, that I might

have an opportunity in the meantime to say soft things, which are still most welcome when attended with good luck; but I was by no means satisfied of her fair play, a circumstance that shocked me not a little, and greatly impaired my opinion of her disinterestedness and delicacy. However, I was resolved to profit by this behaviour, and treat her in my turn with less ceremony; accordingly, I laid close siege to her, and finding her not at all disgusted with the gross incense I offered, that very night made a declaration of love in plain terms. She received my addresses with great gaiety, and pretended to laugh them off; but, at the same time, treated me with such particular complacency, that I was persuaded I had made a conquest of her heart, and concluded myself the happiest man alive. Elevated with these flattering ideas, I sat down again to cards after supper, and with great cheerfulness suffered myself to be cheated of ten guineas more.

It was late before I took my leave, after being favoured with a general invitation; and when I got into bed, the adventures of the day hindered me from sleeping. Sometimes I pleased myself with the hopes of possessing a fine woman with ten thousand pounds; then I would ruminate on the character I had heard of her from Banter, and compare it with the circumstances of her conduct towards me, which seemed to bear too great a resemblance to the picture he had drawn. This introduced a melancholy reflection on the expense I had undergone, and the smallness of my funds to support it, which, by the

bye, were none of my own. In short, I found myself involved in doubts and perplexities, that kept me awake the greatest part of the night.

In the morning, Strap, with whom I had not conversed for two days, presented himself with the utensils for shaving me; upon which, I asked his opinion of the lady whom he had seen me conduct to her coach at Hampstead. "Odd! she's a delicious creature," cried he, "and, as I am informed, a great fortune. I am sorry you did not insist on going home with her. I dare say she would not have refused your company; for she seems to be a good-humoured soul." "There's a time for all things," said I. "You must know, Strap, I was in company with her till one o'clock this morning." I had no sooner pronounced these words than he began to caper about the room, and snap his fingers, crying, in a transport, "The day's our own! — the day's our own!" I gave him to understand that his triumph was a little premature, and that I had more difficulties to surmount than he was aware of. Then I recounted to him the intelligence I had received from Banter, at which he changed colour, shook his head, and observed there was no faith in woman. I told him I was resolved to make a bold push notwithstanding, although I foresaw it would lead me into a great expense; and bade him guess the sum I had lost last night at cards. He scratched his chin, and protested his abhorrence of cards, the very name of which being mentioned, made him sweat with vexation, as it recalled the money-dropper to his remembrance: "But, however," said

he, "you have to do with other-guess people now. Why, I suppose, if you had a bad run last night, you would scarce come off for less than ten or twelve shillings." I was mortified at this piece of simplicity, which I imagined, at that time, was all affected, by way of reprimand for my folly; and asked with some heat, if he thought I spent the evening in a cellar with chairmen and bunters; giving him to know at the same time, that my expense had amounted to eighteen guineas. It would require the pencil of Hogarth to express the astonishment and concern of Strap, on hearing this piece of news. The bason in which he was preparing the lather for my chin, dropped out of his hands, and he remained some time immovable in that ludicrous attitude, with his mouth open, and his eyes thrust forward considerably beyond their station; but remembering my disposition, which was touchy and impatient of control, he smothered his chagrin, and attempted to recollect himself. With this view, he endeavoured to laugh, but, in spite of his teeth, broke out into a whimper, took up his wash-ball and pewter pot, scrubbed my beard with the one, and discharged the other upon my face. I took no notice of his confusion, but after he had fully recovered himself, put him in mind of his right, and assured him of my readiness to surrender his effects whenever he should think proper to demand them. He was nettled at my insinuation, which he thought proceeded from my distrust of his friendship; and begged I would never talk to him in that strain again, unless I had a mind to break his heart.

This good creature's unalterable friendship for me, affected me with the most grateful sentiments, and acted as a spur to my resolution of acquiring a fortune, that I might have it in my power to manifest my generosity in my turn. For this purpose I determined to bring matters to a speedy conclusion with Melinda; well knowing that a few such nights as the last would effectually incapacitate me from prosecuting that or any other advantageous amour.

While my meditation was busied in planning out my future conduct, Mr. Banter favoured me with a visit; and, after breakfast, asked how I had passed the preceding evening. I answered, I was very agreeably entertained at a private house. "Yes," said he, with a sarcastic smile, "you deserved something extraordinary for the price you paid." I was surprised at this remark, and pretended ignorance of his meaning. "Come, come, Random," continued he, "you need not make a mystery of it to me, the whole town has it. I wish that foolish affair between you and Bragwell at Hampstead had been less public. It has set all the busy-bodies at work to find out your real character and situation; and you cannot imagine what conjectures have already circulated at your expense. One suspects you to be a Jesuit in disguise; another thinks you are an agent from the Pretender; a third believes you to be an upstart gamester, because nobody knows anything of your family or fortune; a fourth is of opinion that you are an Irish fortune-hunter." This last hypothesis touched me so nearly, that, to conceal my confusion, I was fain to interrupt his detail, and d—n the world for

an envious meddling community, that would not suffer a gentleman to live without molestation. He took no notice of this apostrophe, but went on, "For my own part, I neither know, nor desire to know, who or what you are; this I am certain of, that few people make a mystery of their origin or situation, who can boast of anything advantageous in either; and my own opinion of the matter is, that you have raised yourself by your industry from nothing to the appearance you now maintain, and which you endeavour to support by some matrimonial scheme." Here he fixed his eyes stedfastly upon me, and perceiving my face covered with blushes, told me, now he was confirmed in his opinion; — "Look ye, Random," said he, "I have divined your plan, and am confident it will never succeed. You are too honest, and too ignorant of the town, to practise the necessary cheats of your profession, and detect the conspiracies that will be formed against you. Besides, you are downright bashful — what the devil! set up for a fortune-hunter before you have conquered the sense of shame! Perhaps you are entitled by your merit, and I believe you are, to a richer and better wife than Melinda; but, take my word for it, she is not to be won at that rate; or, if you are so lucky as to carry her, between you and me, you may say as Teague did, *By my soul, I have gained a loss!* She would take care to spend her fortune in a twinkling, and soon make you sick of her extravagance." I was alarmed by his discourse, while I resented the freedom of it, and expressed my disgust by telling him he was mistaken in my intentions, and desiring he

would give me leave to regulate my conduct according to the dictates of my own reason. He made an apology for the liberty he had taken, and ascribed it to the warmth of his friendship for me; as an uncommon instance of which, he borrowed five guineas, assuring me, there were very few people in the world whom he would so far favour with his confidence. I gave him the money, and professed myself so well convinced of his sincerity, that he had no occasion to put it to such extraordinary proofs for the future. "I thought," said he, "to have asked five pieces more, but hearing you was bubbled of eighteen last night, I presumed you might be out of cash, and resolved to model my demand accordingly." I could not help admiring the cavalier behaviour of this spark, of whom I desired to know his reason for saying I was bubbled. He then gave me to understand, that, before he came to my lodgings, he had beat up Tom Tossle, who, having been present, informed him of the particulars, rehearsed all the fine things I said to Melinda, with which he proposes to entertain the town; and, among other circumstances, assured him, my mistress cheated with so little art, that nobody but a mere novice could have been imposed upon.

The thoughts of becoming a subject of raillery for coxcombs, and losing my money to boot, stung me to the quick; but I made a virtue of my indignation, and swore that no man should, with impunity, either asperse the character of Melinda, or turn my behaviour into ridicule. He replied, in a dry manner, that I would find it an Herculean task to chastise

everybody who would laugh at my expense; and as for the character of Melinda, he did not see how it could suffer by what was laid to her charge; for that cheating at cards, far from being reckoned a blemish among people of fashion, was looked upon as an honourable indication of superior genius and address. "But let us waive this subject," said he, "and go to the coffee-house, in order to make a party for dinner."

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

WE REPAIR TO THE COFFEE-HOUSE, WHERE WE OVERHEAR A CURIOUS DISPUTE BETWEEN WAGTAIL AND MEDLAR, WHICH IS REFERRED TO OUR DECISION — THE DOCTOR GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIMENT — MEDLAR IS ROASTED BY BANTER AT THE ORDINARY — THE OLD GENTLEMAN'S ADVICE TO ME.

BEING as willing to drop the theme, as he to propose it, I accompanied him thither, where we found Mr. Medlar and Doctor Wagtail disputing upon the word *Custard*, which the physician affirmed should be spelled with a *G*, because it was derived from the Latin verb *gustare*, "to taste." But Medlar pleaded custom in behalf of *C*, observing, that, by the doctor's rule, we ought to change pudding into budding, because it is derived from the French word *Boudin*; and in that case why not retain the original orthography and pronunciation of all the foreign words we have adopted? by which means our language would become a dissonant jargon, without standard or propriety. The controversy was referred to us; and Banter, notwithstanding his real opinion to the contrary, decided it in favour of Wagtail: upon which the peevish annuitant arose, and uttering the mono-

syllable "Pish!" with great emphasis, removed to another table.

We then inquired of the doctor what progress he had made in the experiment of distilling tinder-water; and he told us he had been at all the glass-houses about town, but could find nobody who would undertake to blow a retort large enough to hold the third part of the quantity prescribed; but he intended to try the process on as much as would produce five drops, which would be sufficient to prove the specific, and then he would make it a parliament-ary affair; that he had already purchased a consider-able weight of rags, in reducing which to tinder, he had met with a misfortune, which had obliged him to change his lodgings; for he had gathered them in a heap on the floor, and set fire to them with a candle, on the supposition that the boards would sustain no damage, because it is the nature of flame to ascend; but, by some very extraordinary accident, the wood was invaded, and began to blaze with great violence, which disordered him so much, that he had not presence of mind enough to call for assistance, and the whole house must have been consumed, with him in the midst of it, had not the smoke that rolled out of the windows in clouds, alarmed the neighbour-hood, and brought people to his succour. That he had lost a pair of black-velvet breeches and a tie-wig in the hurry, besides the expense of the rags, which were rendered useless by the water used to quench the flame, and the damage of the floor, which he was compelled to repair. That his landlord, believing him distracted, had insisted on his quitting his apart-

ment at a minute's warning, and he was put to incredible inconvenience; but now he was settled in a very comfortable house, and had the use of a large paved yard for preparing his tinder: so that he hoped in a very short time to reap the fruits of his labour.

After having congratulated the doctor on his prospect, and read the papers, we repaired to an auction of pictures, where we entertained ourselves an hour or two. From thence we adjourned to the Mall, and after two or three turns, went back to dinner, Banter assuring us, that he intended to roast Medlar at the ordinary; and, indeed, we were no sooner set than this cynic began to execute his purpose, by telling the old gentleman, that he looked extremely well, considering the little sleep he had enjoyed last night. To this compliment Medlar made no reply but by a stare, accompanied with a significant grin;—and Banter went on thus: "I don't know whether most to admire, the charity of your mind, or the vigour of your body. Upon my soul, Mr. Medlar, you do generous things with the best taste of any man I know: you extend your compassion to real objects, and exact only such returns as they are capable of making. You must know, gentlemen," said he, turning to the company, "I had been up most part of the night with a friend who is ill of a fever, and on my return home this morning chanced to pass by a gin-shop still open, whence issued a confused sound of mirth and jollity: upon which I popped in my head, and perceived Mr. Medlar dancing bare-headed in the midst of ten or

twenty ragged bunters, who rejoiced at his expense. But indeed, Mr. Medlar, you ought not to sacrifice your constitution to your benevolence. Consider you grow old apace; and therefore have a reverend care of your health, which must certainly be very much impaired by these nocturnal expeditions." The testy senior could no longer contain himself, but cried hastily, "'T is well known that your tongue is no slander." "I think," said the other, "you might spare that observation, as you are very sensible, that my tongue has done you signal service on many occasions. You may remember that when you made your addresses to the fat widow, who kept a public-house at Islington, there was a report spread very much to the prejudice of your manhood, which coming to the ears of your mistress, you was discarded immediately, and I brought matters to a reconciliation, by assuring her you had three bastards at nurse in the country: how you ruined your own affair afterwards, it is neither my business nor inclination to relate." This anecdote, which had no other foundation than in Banter's own invention, afforded a good deal of mirth to everybody present, and provoked Mr. Medlar beyond all sufferance; so that he started up in a mighty passion, and, forgetting that his mouth was full, bespattered those who sat next to him, while he discharged his indignation in a volley of oaths, and called Banter insignificant puppy, impertinent jackanapes, and an hundred such appellations; telling the company, he had invented these false malicious aspersions, because he would not lend him money to squander away among rooks and

whores. "A very likely story," said Banter, "that I should attempt to borrow money of a man who is obliged to practise a thousand shifts to make his weekly allowance hold out till Saturday night. Sometimes he sleeps four-and-twenty hours at a stretch, by which means he saves three meals, besides coffee-house expense. Sometimes he is fain to put up with bread and cheese and small beer for dinner; and sometimes he regales on twopenny-worth of ox-cheek in a cellar." "You are a lying miscreant," cried Medlar, in an ecstasy of rage; "I can always command money enough to pay your tailor's bill, which I am sure is no trifle; and I have a good mind to give you a convincing proof of my circumstances, by prosecuting you for defamation, sirrah." By this time the violence of his wrath had deprived him of his appetite, and he sat silent, unable to swallow one mouthful, while his tormentor enjoyed his mortification and increased his chagrin by advising him to lay in plentifully for his next day's fast.

Dinner being ended, we came downstairs to the coffee-room, and Banter went away to keep an appointment, saying, he supposed he should see Wagtail and me in the evening at the Bedford coffee-house. He was no sooner gone, than the old gentleman took me aside, and said, he was sorry to see me so intimate with that fellow, who was one of the most graceless rakes about town, and had already wasted a good estate and constitution upon harlots; that he had been the ruin of many a young man, by introducing them into debauched company, and setting a lewd

example of all manner of wickedness; and that, unless I was on my guard, he would strip me in a short time both of my money and reputation. I thanked him for his information, and promised to conduct myself accordingly, wishing, however, his caution had been a few hours more early, by which means I might have saved five guineas. Notwithstanding this intelligence, I was inclinable to impute some part of the charge to Medlar's revenge for the liberties taken with him at dinner; and, therefore, as soon as I could disengage myself, applied to Wagtail for his opinion of the character in question; resolved to compare their accounts, allowing for the prejudice of each, and to form my judgment upon both, without adhering strictly to either. The doctor assured me, that he was a very pretty gentleman of family and fortune; a scholar, a wit, a critic, and perfectly well acquainted with the town; that his honour and courage were unquestionable, though some extravagances he had been guilty of, and his talents for satire, had procured him enemies, and made some people shy of his acquaintance. From these different sketches, I concluded that Banter was a young fellow of some parts, who had spent his fortune, but retained his appetites, and fallen out with the world, because he could not enjoy it to his wish.

I went to the Bedford coffee-house in the evening, where I met my friends, from thence proceeded to the play, and afterwards carried them home to my lodgings, where we supped in great good-humour.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

I RECEIVE A CHALLENGE — THE CONSEQUENCES OF IT — THE QUARREL BEING MADE UP, AM PUT IN ARREST, BY THE CARE AND AFFECTION OF STRAP — BUT IMMEDIATELY RELEASED UPON EXPLAINING MY AFFAIR — THE BEHAVIOUR OF MR. OREGAN AND HIS TWO FRIENDS — I VISIT MELINDA, WHOM I DIVERT WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE DUEL — PROPOSE MARRIAGE — SHE REFERS THE MATTER TO HER MOTHER, OF WHOM I MAKE A SOLEMN DEMAND OF HER DAUGHTER — THE OLD LADY'S BEHAVIOUR — I AM DISCARDED, AND RESENT THEIR DISDAIN.

WHEN I was ready to go abroad next day, Strap brought me a letter, *To Mr. Random, Esq. Those* — Which, upon opening, I found contained a challenge, conceived in these very extraordinary terms:

"SIR, — Whereas I am informed that you make love to Miss Melinda Goosetrap — This is to let you know that she is under promise of marriage to me; and that I am at this present waiting at the back of Montague House, with a pair of good pistols in my hand; and if you will keep your appointment, I will make your tongue confess (after the breath is out of your body) that you do not deserve her so well as

"Your's, etc.

"ROURK OREGAN,"

I guessed from the style and subscription of this billet, that my rival was a true Milesian, and was not a little uneasy at the contents, especially that part in which he asserted his right to my mistress by promise, a circumstance I did not know how to reconcile to her good sense and penetration. However, this was no time for me to decline the defiance, because the success of my addresses might in a great measure depend upon my behaviour in that affair. I therefore immediately loaded my pistols, and betook myself in a hackney coach to the place appointed, where I found a tall raw-boned man, with a hard-featured countenance, and black bushy beard, walking by himself, wrapped up in a shabby great coat, over which his own hair descended in a leathern queue, from his head, that was covered with a greasy hat trimmed with a tarnished *point d'Espagne*. He no sooner perceived me advancing, than he pulled a pistol from his bosom, and presenting it at me, snapped it without the least preamble. Alarmed at this rude salutation, I made a stand; and before he could adjust his other piece, fired one of mine at him, without doing any damage. By this time he was ready with his second, that flashed in the pan without going off. Upon which he called, with a true Tipperary cadence, "Fire away, honey,"—and began to hammer his flint with great deliberation. But I was resolved to make use of the advantage fortune had given me; and therefore stepped up, without throwing away my fire, desiring him to ask his life, or prepare for another world; but this stout Hibernian refused to condescend, and complained bitterly of my having quitted

my ground before he could return my shot; saying I ought to go back to my station, and let him have an equal chance with me. I endeavoured to persuade him that I had given him a double chance already; and it was my business to prevent him from enjoying a third; — but now, since I had an opportunity, I demanded a parley, and desired to know his condition, and reason for calling me to the field, who, to the best of my remembrance, far from having done him an injury, had never before seen him. He told me, that he was a gentleman of fortune, who had spent all he had, and hearing that Melinda had got ten thousand pounds, he intended to make himself master of that sum by espousing her, and was determined, in an honourable way, to cut the throats of all those who stood between him and his hopes. I then demanded to know the foundation of his hopes; and, now that I had seen him, being more and more astonished at the circumstance of the promise, desired that he would explain that mystery. He gave me to understand, that he trusted entirely to his birth and personal merit; that he had frequently written to Melinda, setting forth his claim and pretensions, but she was never kind enough to send an answer, or even to admit him into her presence; and that the promise he mentioned in his letter was made by his friend Mr. Gahagan, who assured him, that no woman could resist a man of his appearance. I could not forbear laughing to excess at the simplicity of my rival, who did not seem to relish my mirth, but began to be very serious. Upon which I endeavoured to appease him, by giving him my word and honour,

that, far from prejudicing his addresses to the lady, I would represent him to her in the most favourable light I could with any regard to truth; but he must not be surprised if she should remain blind to his deserts, for nothing was more capricious than a woman's mind, and the affection of that sex was seldom purchased with virtue alone. That my declaration might have the better effect, I took notice of his dishabille, and, professing sorrow at seeing a gentleman reduced, slipped two guineas into his hand; at sight of which he threw away his pistols, and, hugging me in his arms, cried, "Arrah, by Jesus now, you are the best friend I have met with these seven long years." When I had suffered some minutes in his embrace, he quitted me, and, picking up his rusty arms, wished the devil might burn him if he should give me any further trouble about womankind.

The quarrel being thus amicably composed, I begged leave to look at his pistols, which I found so crazy and so foul, that I believe it was happy for him neither of them was discharged, for one of them would certainly have split in the going off, and he would, in all probability, have lost his hand in the explosion; but what gave me a lively idea of the man's character was to find, upon examination, that one of them had been loaded without being primed, and the other primed without a charge.

While we walked home together, I expressed a desire of knowing my friend's history; and he informed me of his having served in the German army as a volunteer against the Turks; that, for his be-

haviour at the siege of Belgrade, he had been honoured with an ensign's commission, and afterwards promoted to the rank of lieutenant, in which station it was his misfortune to affront his captain, who challenged him to the field, and was killed in the duel, upon which he was obliged to retreat; — that he had been in England some years soliciting his friends for provision in the British army; but being hitherto unsuccessful, was desired by Mr. Gahagan to turn his thoughts to matrimony, and make his fortune by an advantageous match; in consequence of which advice, he had made up to Melinda, and having heard, by means of an Irish footman in the family, that I was her chief favourite, had called me out, in hopes of removing by my death the greatest obstruction to his desires; but now he was convinced of my honour and generosity, he swore by the blessed Virgin, he would think of her no more, if there was not another woman in the world. As a further proof of his veracity, which I did not at all doubt, he opened an old iron snuff-box, and pulled out his commission in the Imperial army, and his captain's challenge, which he preserved as testimonials of his character. I was so well convinced of this poor man's honesty and courage, that I determined to speak in his behalf to some of my acquaintance, who might recommend his case to the consideration of those who could provide for him; and in the meantime to accommodate him with a few clothes, by which his appearance would be much mended, and himself enabled to renew his solicitations in person.

As we walked along, conversing socially together,

we were met by a file of musketeers, and Strap at their head, who no sooner approached, than, with a frantic look, he cried, "Seize them! — in the name of God! seize them." — We were accordingly surrounded, and put in arrest by the corporal, who was commanding officer; but Captain Oregan disengaged himself, and ran with such speed towards Tottenham Court Road, that he was out of sight in a moment. When my arms were delivered up, and myself secured, Strap became a little more composed, and asked pardon for the liberty he had taken, which he hoped I would excuse, as it proceeded from his affection. He then told me, that, suspecting the letter (which, by the bye, was brought by the author himself) contained something extraordinary, he had peeped through the key-hole, and seen me load my pistols; upon which he ran down to Whitehall, and applied to the officer on guard for a party to put me in arrest; but, before he returned, I was gone in a coach; that he had inquired which way I went, and having heard that duels were commonly fought at the back of Montague House, he conducted the guard to this place, where he thanked God for having found me safe and sound. I gave him to understand, that I forgave his officious concern for once, but cautioned him, in pretty severe terms, of making me the subject of idle conversation for the future; then, turning to the corporal, thanked him for his care, and gave him a crown to drink with his men, assuring him that the rencontre was over long before he came up, and everything compromised, as he might observe by our behaviour; as a farther proof of which he would find, upon examination, that one of my

pistols had been discharged; — but this civil person, without giving himself or me any further trouble, received the bounty with a thousand bows and acknowledgments, and, returning the pistols, released me immediately.

He was not gone a hundred yards, when my friend Oregan came up, in order to rescue me, with two tatter demalions whom he had engaged for that purpose about the purlieus of St. Giles's: one of them was armed with a musket that wanted a lock, and another with a rusty broadsword; but their dress surpassed all description. When he understood I was already free, he made an apology for his abrupt departure, and introduced me to his two companions: first, to Counsellor Fitz-Clabber, who, he told me, was then employed in compiling a history of the kings of Munster, from Irish manuscripts; and then to his friend Mr. Gahagan, who was a profound philosopher and politician, and had projected many excellent schemes for the good of his country. But it seems these literati had been very ill rewarded for their ingenious labours; for between them both there was but one shirt and a half pair of breeches. I thanked them very kindly for their readiness to assist me, and, having offered my service in my turn, bade them good-morrow, desiring Oregan to accompany me to my lodgings, where he was fitted with decent clothes from my wardrobe, so much to his satisfaction, that he swore eternal gratitude and friendship for me, and, at my request, recounted all the adventures of his life.

In the afternoon I waited on Melinda, who received me with great kindness and familiarity, and laughed

excessively at my adventure with the Irishman, to whose wishes she was no stranger, having more than a dozen letters in her possession, which he had wrote to her on the subject of love, and which, for my entertainment, she submitted to my perusal. Having made ourselves merry at the expense of this poor admirer, I seized the opportunity of her mother's going out of the room, and introduced my own passion, which I recommended to her with all the ardour and eloquence I was master of. I flattered, sighed, and swore, entreated, and acted a thousand extravagances, in hopes of making some impression on her heart; but she heard everything I said without discovering the least emotion; and other company came in, before she would vouchsafe one serious reply. After tea, the cards were brought in, according to custom, and it was my good fortune to have Melinda for my partner; by which means, instead of losing, I came off with five guineas clear gain.

I soon became acquainted with a good many people of fashion, and spent my time in the modish diversions of the town, such as plays, operas, masquerades, drums, assemblies, and puppet-shows; chiefly in company with Melinda, whom I cultivated with all the eagerness and address that my prospect could inspire, and my education afford; I spared neither my person nor my purse, to gratify her vanity and pride; my rivals were intimidated, and indeed outshone; and, after all, I began to fear that the dear creature had not a heart to lose. At last, finding myself unable to support the expense of this amour much longer, I was determined to bring the matter to a crisis; and one evening,

while we were together by ourselves, complained of her indifference, described the tortures of suspense to a lovesick mind, and pressed her to disclose her sentiments of matrimony and me, with such earnestness, that she could not, with all her art, shift the subject, but was obliged to come to an éclaircissement. She told me with a careless air, that she had no objection to my person, and, if I could satisfy her mother in other particulars, I should not find her averse to the match; but she was resolved to do nothing in such a momentous concern, without the advice and consent of her parent. This was no very agreeable declaration to me, whose aim had been to win her inclination first, and then secure my conquest by a private marriage, to which I flattered myself she would express no reluctance. That I might not, however, desert my cause before it was desperate, I waited on her mother, and with great formality demanded the daughter in marriage. The good lady, who was a very notable woman, behaved with great state and civility; thanked me for the honour I intended her family; and said, that she did not doubt that I was in all respects qualified to make a woman happy; but it concerned her, as a parent anxious about the welfare of her child, to inquire into the particulars of my fortune, and know what settlement I proposed to make. To this intimation, which would have utterly disconcerted me if I had not expected it, I replied, without hesitation, that, though my fortune was very small, I was a gentleman by birth and education, would maintain her daughter in the sphere of a gentlewoman, and settle her own

dowry on her and her heirs for ever. This careful matron did not seem to relish my proposal, but observed, with a demure countenance, that there was no necessity for settling that upon her child which was her own already: however, if I pleased, her lawyer should confer with mine upon the matter; and, in the meantime, she desired I would favour her with the perusal of my rent-roll. Notwithstanding the vexation I was under, I could scarce forbear laughing in her face, at the mention of my rent-roll, which was, indeed, a severe piece of satire on my pretensions. I frankly owned I had no landed estate; and told her, that I could not exactly specify the sum I was master of, until I had regulated my affairs, which were at present in some disorder; but that I would take an opportunity of satisfying her upon that head very soon.

It was not long before I took my leave, and returned to my lodgings in a very melancholy mood, persuaded that I had nothing more to expect from that quarter. I was confirmed in this opinion next day, when I went back with a view of explaining myself more fully to the old gentlewoman; and was told by the footman, that his ladies were not at home, although I had seen Melinda through the blinds at the parlour window, as I went up to the door. Incensed at this affront, I quitted the door, without saying one word, and, as I repassed the parlour, bowed to Miss, who still remained in the same situation, securely screened, as she thought, from view.

This disappointment gave me more uneasiness on

Strap's account than my own; for I was in no danger of dying for love of Melinda; on the contrary, the remembrance of my charming Narcissa was a continual check upon my conscience, during the whole course of my addresses; and perhaps contributed to the bad success of my scheme, by controlling my raptures, and condemning my design.

There was a necessity for informing my companion of everything that happened to me, and I performed this piece of duty in an affected passion, swearing I would be his packhorse no longer, and desiring him to take the management of his affairs into his own hands. This finesse had the desired effect; for, instead of grumbling over my miscarriage, Strap was frightened at the passion I feigned, and begged me, for the love of God, to be appeased; observing, that, although we had suffered a great loss, it was not irreparable; and, if Fortune frowned to-day, she might perhaps smile to-morrow. I pretended to acquiesce in his remarks, praise his equanimity, and promise to improve by misfortune. He, on the other hand, pretended to be perfectly well satisfied with my conduct, and conjured me to follow the dictates of my own reflection; but, in spite of all his affectation, I perceived his inward affliction, and his visage sensibly increased in longitude from that day.

CHAPTER FIFTY

I LONG TO BE REVENGED ON MELINDA — APPLY TO BANTER FOR HIS ASSISTANCE — HE CONTRIVES A SCHEME FOR THAT PURPOSE, WHICH IS PUT IN EXECUTION WITH GREAT SUCCESS — I MAKE AN ATTEMPT ON THE HEART OF MISS GRIPEWELL, BUT AM DISAPPOINTED — GROW MELANCHOLY AT MY DISAPPOINTMENT, AND HAVE RECOURSE TO THE BOTTLE — RECEIVE A BILLET-DOUX — AM RAVISHED WITH THE CONTENTS — FIND MYSELF INVOLVED IN AN INTRIGUE, WHICH I IMAGINED WOULD MAKE MY FORTUNE — AM CONFOUNDED AT MY MISTAKE, WHICH BANISHES ALL THOUGHTS OF MATRIMONY.

IN the meantime, my attention was wholly engrossed in search of another mistress and the desire of being revenged on Melinda, in both which schemes I was very much assisted by Billy Chatter, who was such a necessary creature among the ladies, that in all private dances he engaged the men. To him therefore I applied, desiring he would introduce me to a partner of some figure at the next private assembly, for the sake of a frolic, the intention of which I would afterwards communicate. Billy, who had heard something of the difference between Melinda and me, immediately smoked part of my design, and,

thinking I only wanted to alarm her jealousy a little, promised to gratify my desire, by matching me with a partner worth thirty thousand pounds, whom the ladies of this end of the town had lately taken under their management and protection. Upon further inquiry, I found this person's name was Miss Biddy Gripewell; that her father, who had been a pawnbroker, died intestate, by which means all his substance descended to his daughter, who was so little a favourite, that, could the old man have prevailed with his own rapacious disposition to part with as much money as would have paid the expense of a will, she would have inherited a sixth part of his fortune; that, during his life, far from being educated in a way suitable to such great expectations, she was obliged to live like a servant wench, and do the most menial offices in the family. But his funeral was no sooner performed, than she assumed the fine lady, and found so many people of both sexes to flatter, caress, and instruct her, that, for want of discretion and experience, she was grown insufferably vain and arrogant, and pretended to no less than a duke or earl at least for her husband. That she had the misfortune to be neglected by the English quality, but a certain poor Scottish lord was then making interest to be introduced to her acquaintance. In the meantime, she was fallen into the hands of a notable lady, who had already disposed of her to a lieutenant of foot, a distant relation of her ladyship's, though Miss, as yet, knew nothing of the affair. And, lastly, that, if I proposed to dance with her, I must give him

leave to represent me as a knight or foreign count at least. I was ravished at this piece of information, and consented, for one night, to personate a French marquis, that I might the easier fulfil my revenge.

Having made the appointment with Chatter, I went to Banter's lodgings, as I had by this time conceived a great opinion of his penetration and knowledge; and, after I had enjoined secrecy, told him every circumstance of my disgrace with Melinda, and imparted the plan I had projected to mortify that proud coquette, desiring his advice in improving, and assistance in executing the scheme. Nothing could be more agreeable to his misanthropical temper, than an account of her behaviour and my resentment. He applauded my resolution, and proposed that I should not only provide myself with a proper partner, but also procure such an one for Miss Goosetrap as should infallibly entail upon her the ridicule of all her acquaintance. For this purpose he mentioned his barber, who, he said, was an exceeding coxcomb, lately come from Paris, whose absurd affectation and grimace would easily pass upon her for the sprightly politesse of a gentleman improved by travel. I hugged him for this hint; and he assured me, it would be no difficult matter to make him believe, that Melinda, having seen him by accident, was captivated by his appearance, and longed for his acquaintance. He actually engaged him on this pretence, and painted his good fortune in such colours, that the poor shaver was quite beside himself with joy. He was immediately fitted with a tawdry suit of clothes belonging to Banter, and by

him recommended to Chatter, as a very pretty fellow just returned from his travels. Mr. Billy, who acted as a gentleman usher to a great many of the fair sex in and about town, undertook at once to bespeak Melinda in his behalf; and everything happened according to my wish.

At the time appointed, I appeared dressed to the best advantage; and, in the character of Marquis, had the honour of opening the ball with the rich heiress, who attracted the eyes of the whole company, by the prodigious number of jewels with which she was adorned. Among others, I perceived Melinda, who could no more conceal her envy than astonishment at my success. Her curiosity was still more flagrant and tormenting, for she had never seen Miss Gripewell before; and Chatter, who alone could give her any satisfaction on that head, was engaged in conversation at the other end of the room. I observed her impatience, and exulted in her chagrin; and, after my partner was set, took the opportunity of passing by her to make a slight bow without stopping; which completed my triumph and her indignation. She changed colour, bridled up, assumed an air of disdain, and flirted her fan with such a fury, that it went to pieces in a moment, to the no small entertainment of those who sat near and observed her.

At length, the metamorphosed barber took her out, and acted his part with such ridiculous extravagance, that the mirth of the whole company was excited at his expense, and his partner so much ashamed, that, before the country-dances began,

she retired in great confusion, under pretence of being taken suddenly ill, and was followed by her gallant, who, no doubt, imagined her indisposition was nothing but love; and laid hold of the occasion of conducting her home, to comfort her, with an assurance of his entertaining a reciprocal passion. They were no sooner gone, than an inquisitive whisper of "Who is he?" ran round the room; and Chatter could give no other intelligence about him, than that he was a man of fortune just returned from his travels. I, who alone was acquainted with his real quality, affected ignorance, well knowing that female curiosity would not rest satisfied with such a general account, and that the discovery would proceed with a better grace from anybody than me.

Meanwhile, I was tempted by the richness of the prize, to practise upon Miss Gripewell's heart, but soon found it too well fortified with pride and indifference to yield to any efforts in my own character, and I neither would nor could preserve the title I had borrowed longer than that night.

As I expected, everything came to light next day. The barber, in pure simplicity of heart, detected himself to Melinda, and discovered the foundation of his hopes. She sickened at the affront, and was ashamed to show her face in public for many weeks after this accident. Poor Chatter found it impossible to justify himself to her satisfaction; was in utter disgrace with Miss Gripewell, for having imposed me upon her as a nobleman; and suffered very much in his character and influence among the ladies in general.

Finding my finances diminished more than one half, and my project as little advanced as on the first day of my arrival in town, I began to despair of my success, and grew melancholy at the prospect of approaching want. To dispel the horrors of this fiend, I had recourse to the bottle, and kept more company than ever. I became particularly attached to the playhouse, conversed with the actors behind the scenes, grew acquainted with a body of Templars, and in a short time commenced a professed wit and critic. Indeed, I may say, without vanity, that I was much better qualified than any one of my companions, who were, generally speaking, of all the creatures I ever conversed with, the most ignorant and assuming. By means of these avocations, I got the better of care, and learned to separate my ideas in such a manner, that whenever I was attacked by a gloomy reflection, I could shove it aside, and call in some agreeable reverie to my assistance. This was not the case with Strap, who practised a thousand shifts to conceal the sorrow that preyed upon his carcase, and reduced him to the resemblance of a mere skeleton.

While I thus posted, in a thoughtless manner, towards poverty, I one day received, by the penny-post, a letter written in a woman's hand, containing a great many high-flown compliments, warm protestations of love, couched in a very poetical style, an earnest desire of knowing whether or not my heart was engaged, by leaving an answer at a certain place, directed to R. B., and the whole subscribed, "Your incognita." I was transported with joy on reading

the contents of this billet-doux, which I admired as a masterpiece of tenderness and elegance, and was already up to the ears in love with the author, whom my imagination represented as a lady of fortune, in the bloom of youth and beauty. Elevated with this conjecture, I went to work, and exhausted my invention in composing an answer suitable to the sublimity of her style, and the ardour of her sentiments. I expressed my admiration of her wit in terms the most hyperbolical; and, while I acknowledged myself unworthy of her regard, declared myself enamoured of her understanding; and, in the most pathetic manner, implored the honour of an interview. Having finished this performance, and communicated it to Strap, who skipped about for joy, I despatched him with it to the place appointed, which was the house of a milliner not far from Bond Street, and desired him to keep watch near the door for some time, that he might discover the person who should call for it. In less than an hour he returned with a joyful countenance, and told me, that, soon after he had delivered the letter, a chairman was called, to whom it was given, with directions to carry it to the house of a rich gentleman in the neighbourhood, whither he (Strap) followed him, and saw it put into the hands of a waiting-woman, who paid the messenger, and shut the door. That, upon inquiry at an alehouse hard by, where he called for a pint of beer, he understood, the gentleman to whom the house belonged had an only daughter, very handsome, who would inherit his whole estate, and who certainly was the author of the billet I had received. I was of the

same opinion, and hugging myself in the happy prospect, dressed immediately, and passed in great state by the house that contained my unknown admirer. Nor was my vanity disappointed; for I perceived a beautiful young creature standing at one of the windows of the dining-room, who, I imagined, observed me with more than common curiosity. That I might indulge her view, and at the same time feast my own, I affected to stop, and give orders to Strap, in the street, just opposite to her station, by which means I had an opportunity of seeing her more distinctly, and of congratulating myself on having made a conquest of so much perfection. In a few minutes she retired, and I betook myself to the ordinary, in a rapture of hope, which deprived me of appetite for that meal, and sent me home in the evening to indulge my contemplation.

Early next day, I was favoured with another epistle from my unknown charmer, signifying her unutterable joy at the receipt of mine, which, while it made a tender of my heart, convinced her of the value of it. Above all things, she professed extreme pleasure in finding me so much attached to her understanding, a circumstance that not only flattered her in the most sensible part, but at the same time argued my own sagacity. As for the interview I desired, she assured me, that I could not be more eager for such an occasion than she; but she must not only sacrifice a little more to decorum, but be satisfied of my honourable intentions, before she would grant that request: meanwhile, she gave me to understand, that although she might owe some

deference to the opinion of certain persons, she was resolved, in an affair that so nearly concerned her happiness, to consult her own inclination, preferable to the advice of the whole world; especially as she was urged to such condescension by no consideration of fortune, what she depended upon being her own without restriction or control. Struck with admiration at the philosophy and self-denial of my mistress, who seemed insensible of the beauty she possessed, and, in particular, ravished with that piece of intelligence, by which I learned her fortune was independent, I resumed the pen, launched out into encomiums on the dignity of her sentiments, affected to undervalue the charms of external beauty, pretended to ground my passion on the qualities of her mind, complained of her rigour in sacrificing my repose to an over-scrupulous regard to decorum, and declared the purity of my designs in the most solemn and pathetic vows. This performance being sealed and directed, was sent to the place appointed, by Strap, who, that we might be still the more confirmed in our belief, renewed his watch, and in a little time brought back the same information as before, with this addition, that Miss Sparkle (the name of my correspondent) looking out at the window, no sooner saw the messenger arrive, than she shut the casement in a sort of beautiful confusion, and disappeared; eager, no doubt, to hear from the dear object of her love.

My doubts now vanished, the long-expected port appeared, and I looked upon myself as perfectly secure of that happiness I had been in quest of so

long. After dinner, I sauntered, in company with Doctor Wagtail, to that part of the town in which my inamorata lived; and, as he was a mere register, inquired of him into the name, character, and fortune of everybody who possessed a good house in the streets through which we passed; when it came to his turn to mention Sir John Sparkle, he represented him as a man of an immense estate and narrow disposition, who mewed up his only child, a fine young lady, from the conversation of mankind, under the strict watch and inspection of an old governante, who was either so honest, envious, or insatiable, that nobody had been, as yet, able to make her a friend, or get access to her charge, though numbers attempted it every day; not so much on account of her expectations from her father, who, being a widower, might marry again, and have sons, as for a fortune of twelve thousand pounds left her by an uncle, of which she could not be deprived. This piece of news exactly tallying with the last part of the letter I had been honoured with in the morning, had such an effect on me, that any man, except Wagtail, might have observed my emotion; but his attention was too much engrossed by the contemplation of his own importance, to suffer him to be affected with the deportment of any other body, unless it happened to be so particular, that he could not help taking notice of it.

When I had disengaged myself from him, whose conversation grew insipid to me, I went home and made Strap acquainted with the fruit of my researches. This faithful squire was almost choked

with transports, and even wept with joy; but whether, on account of himself or me, I shall not pretend to determine. Next day a third billet-doux was brought to me, containing many expressions of tenderness, mingled with some affecting doubts, about the artifice of man, the inconstancy of youth, and the jealousy often attending the most sincere passion; withal desiring I would excuse her, if she should try me a little longer, before she declared herself beyond the power of retracting. These interesting scruples added fuel to my flame, and impatience to my hope; I redoubled my complaints of her indifference, and pressed her to an assignation with such fervid entreaties, that, in a few days, she consented to meet me at the house of that milliner who had forwarded all my letters. During the interval between the date of her promise and the hour of appointment, my pride soared beyond all reason and description; I lost all remembrance of the gentle Narcissa, and my thoughts were wholly employed in planning triumphs over the malice and contempt of the world.

At length the happy hour arrived; I flew to the place of rendezvous, and was conducted into an apartment, where I had not waited ten minutes, when I heard the rustling of silk, and the sound of feet ascending the stairs. My heart took the alarm, and beat quick; my cheeks glowed, my nerves thrilled, and my knees shook with ecstasy! I perceived the door opening, saw a gold brocade petticoat advance, and sprung forward to embrace my charmer! Heaven and earth! — how shall I paint my situation,

when I found Miss Sparkle converted into a wrinkled hag, turned of seventy! I was struck dumb with amazement, and petrified with horror! This ancient Urganda perceived my disorder, and, approaching with a languishing air, seized my hand, asking, in a squeaking tone, if I was indisposed. Her monstrous affectation completed the disgust I had conceived for her at first appearance; and it was a long time before I could command myself so much as to behave with common civility. At length, however, I recollected myself, and pronounced an apology for my behaviour, which, I said, proceeded from a dizziness that seized me all of a sudden. My hoary Dulcinea, who, no doubt, had been alarmed at my confusion, no sooner learned the cause to which I now ascribed it, than she discovered her joy in a thousand amorous coquetries, and assumed the sprightly airs of a girl of sixteen. One while, she ogled me with her dim eyes, quenched in rheum; then, as if she was ashamed of that freedom, she affected to look down, blush, and play with her fan; then toss her head, that I might not perceive a palsy that shook it, ask some childish questions with a lisping accent, giggle and grin with her mouth shut, to conceal the ravages of time upon her teeth; leer upon me again, sigh piteously, fling herself about in her chair to show her agility, and act a great many more absurdities that youth and beauty can alone excuse. Shocked as I was at my disappointment, my disposition was incapable of affronting any person who loved me; I therefore endeavoured to put a good face on the matter for the present, resolved to drop the whole

affair as soon as I should get clear of her company. With this view, I uttered some civil things, and, in particular, desired to know the name and condition of the lady who had honoured me so much. She told me her name was Withers; that she lived with Sir John Sparkle in quality of governess to his only daughter, in which situation she had picked up a comfortable sufficiency to make her easy for life; that she had the pleasure of seeing me at church, where my appearance and deportment made such an impression upon her heart, that she could enjoy no ease until she had inquired into my character, which she found so amiable in all respects, that she yielded to the violence of her inclination, and ventured to declare her passion, with too little regard, perhaps, to the decorum of her sex; but she hoped I would forgive a trespass of which I myself was, in some measure, the cause, and impute her intrusion to the irresistible dictates of love. No decayed rake ever swallowed a bolus with more reluctance than I felt in making a reply suitable to this compliment, when, instead of the jewel, I found the crazy casket only in my power; and yet my hopes began to revive a little, when I considered, that, by carrying on the appearance of an intrigue with the duenna, I might possibly obtain access to her charge. Encouraged by this suggestion, my temper grew more serene, my reserve wore off, I talked *en cavalier*, and even made love to this antiquated coquette, who seemed extremely happy in her adorer, and spread all her allurements to make her imagined conquest more secure. The good woman of the house treated

us with tea and sweetmeats, and afterwards withdrew, like a civil experienced matron as she was. Left to our mutual endearments, Miss Withers (for she was still a maiden) began to talk of matrimony, and expressed so much impatience in all her behaviour, that had she been fifty years younger, I might possibly have gratified her longing without having recourse to the church; but this step my virtue, as well as interest, forbade. When the inclinations of an old maid settle upon a young fellow, he is persecuted with her addresses; but, should he once grant her the favour, he will never be able to disentangle himself from her importunities and reproaches. It was my business to defer the ceremony as long as possible, under the most specious pretences, with a view of becoming acquainted with Miss Sparkle in the meantime; and I did not despair of success, when I considered, that, in the course of our correspondence, I should, in all probability, be invited to visit my mistress in her own apartment, and by these means have an opportunity of conversing with her charming ward. Pleased with this prospect, my heart dilated with joy, I talked in raptures to the stale governante, and kissed her shrivelled hand with great devotion. She was so much transported with her good fortune, that she could not contain her ecstasy, but flew upon me like a tigress, and pressed her skinny lips to mine; when (as it was no doubt concerted by her evil genius) a dose of garlic she had swallowed that morning, to dispel wind I suppose, began to operate with such a sudden explosion, that human nature, circumstanced as I was, could not

endure the shock with any degree of temper. I lost all patience and reflection, flung away from her in an instant, snatched my hat and cane, and ran downstairs as if the devil had me in pursuit, and could scarce refrain the convulsion of my bowels, which were grievously offended by the perfume that assaulted me. Strap, who waited my return with impatience, seeing me arrive in the utmost disorder, stood motionless with apprehension, and durst not inquire into the cause.

After I had washed my mouth more than once, and recruited my spirits with a glass of wine, I recounted to him every particular of what had happened; to which he made no other reply for some time, than lifting up his eyes, clasping his hands, and uttering a hollow groan. At length he observed, in a melancholy tone, that it was a thousand pities my organs were so delicate as to be offended with the smell of garlic. "Ah! God help us," said he, "'t is not the steams of garlic — no, nor of something else, that would give me the least uneasiness; see what it is to be a cobbler's son." I replied hastily, "I wish, then, you would go and retrieve my miscarriage." At this suggestion he started, forced a smile, and left the room, shaking his head. Whether the old gentlewoman resented my abrupt departure so much that her love changed into disdain, or was ashamed to see me on account of her infirmity, I know not; but I was never troubled again with her passion.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

I CULTIVATE AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH TWO NOBLEMEN — AM INTRODUCED TO EARL STRUTWELL — HIS KIND PROMISES AND INVITATION — THE BEHAVIOUR OF HIS PORTER AND LACQUEY — HE RECEIVES ME WITH AN APPEARANCE OF UNCOMMON AFFECTION — UNDERTAKES TO SPEAK IN MY BEHALF TO THE MINISTER — INFORMS ME OF HIS SUCCESS, AND WISHES ME JOY — INTRODUCES A CONVERSATION ABOUT PETRONIUS ARBITER — FALLS IN LOVE WITH MY WATCH, WHICH I PRESS UPON HIM — I MAKE A PRESENT OF A DIAMOND RING TO LORD STRADDLE — IMPART MY GOOD FORTUNE TO STRAP AND BANTER, WHO DISABUSES ME, TO MY UTTER MORTIFICATION.

BAFFLED hitherto in my matrimonial schemes, I began to question my talents for the science of fortune-hunting, and to bend my thoughts towards some employment under the government; with the view of procuring which, I cultivated the acquaintance of Lords Straddle and Swillpot, whose fathers were men of interest at court. I found these young noblemen as open to my advances as I could desire. I accompanied them in their midnight rambles, and often dined with them at taverns, where I had the honour of paying the reckoning.

I one day took the opportunity, while I was loaded with protestations of friendship, to disclose

my desire of being settled in some sinecure, and to solicit their influence in my behalf. Swillpot, squeezing my hand, said I might depend upon his service, by G—d. The other swore that no man would be more proud than he to run my errands. Encouraged by these declarations, I ventured to express an inclination to be introduced to their fathers, who were able to do my business at once. Swillpot frankly owned he had not spoke to his father these three years; and Straddle assured me his father having lately disobliged the minister, by subscribing his name to a protest in the House of Peers, was thereby rendered incapable of serving his friends at present; but he undertook to make me acquainted with Earl Strutwell, who was hand and glove with a certain person who ruled the roast. This offer I embraced with many acknowledgments, and plied him so closely, in spite of a thousand evasions, that he found himself under a necessity of keeping his word, and actually carried me to the levee of this great man, where he left me in a crowd of fellow-dependents, and was ushered to a particular closet audience; from whence in a few minutes he returned with his lordship, who took me by the hand, assured me he would do me all the service he could, and desired to see me often. I was charmed with my reception, and, although I had heard that a courtier's promise is not to be depended upon, I thought I discovered so much sweetness of temper and candour in this earl's countenance, that I did not doubt of finding my account in his protection. I resolved, therefore, to profit by this permission, and waited

on him next audience day, when I was favoured with a particular smile, squeeze of the hand, and a whisper, signifying that he wanted half an hour's conversation with me in private, when he should be disengaged, and for that purpose desired me to come and drink a dish of chocolate with him to-morrow morning. This invitation, which did not a little flatter my vanity and expectation, I took care to observe, and went to his lordship's house at the time appointed. Having rapped at the gate, the porter unbolted and kept it half open, placing himself in the gap, like soldiers in a breach, to dispute my passage. I asked if his lord was stirring? He answered with a surly aspect, "No." "At what hour does he commonly rise?" said I. "Sometimes sooner, sometimes later," said he, closing the door upon me by degrees. I then told him, I was come by his lordship's own appointment; to which intimation this Cerberus replied, "I have received no orders about the matter;" and was upon the point of shutting me out, when I recollected myself all of a sudden, and, slipping a crown into his hand, begged as a favour that he would inquire, and let me know whether or not the earl was up. The grim janitor relented at the touch of my money, which he took with all the indifference of a tax-gatherer, and showed me into a parlour, where, he said, I might amuse myself till such time as his lord should be awake. I had not sat ten minutes in this place, when a footman entered, and, without speaking, stared at me; I interpreted this piece of his behaviour into, "Pray, sir, what is your business?"

and asked the same question I had put to the porter, when I accosted him first. The lacquey made the same reply, and disappeared before I could get any further intelligence. In a little time he returned, on pretence of poking the fire, and looked at me again with great earnestness; upon which I began to perceive his meaning, and tipping him with half a crown, desired he would be so good as to fall upon some method of letting the earl know that I was in the house. He made a low bow, said "Yes, sir," and vanished. This bounty was not thrown away, for in an instant he came back, and conducted me to a chamber, where I was received with great kindness and familiarity by his lordship, whom I found just risen, in his morning gown and slippers. After breakfast, he entered into a particular conversation with me about my travels, the remarks I had made abroad, and examined me to the full extent of my understanding. My answers seemed to please him very much; he frequently squeezed my hand, and looking at me with a singular complacency in his countenance, bade me depend upon his good offices with the ministry in my behalf. "Young men of your qualifications," said he, "ought to be cherished by every administration. For my own part, I see so little merit in the world, that I have laid it down as a maxim, to encourage the least appearance of genius and virtue to the utmost of my power — you have a great deal of both; and will not fail of making a figure one day, if I am not mistaken, but you must lay your account with mounting by gradual steps to the summit of your fortune. Rome was not built in

a day. As you understand the languages perfectly well, how would you like to cross the sea as secretary to an embassy?" I assured his lordship, with great eagerness, that nothing could be more agreeable to my inclination. Upon which he bade me make myself easy, my business was done, for he had a place of that kind in his view. This piece of generosity affected me so much, that I was unable for some time to express my gratitude, which at length broke out in acknowledgments of my own unworthiness, and encomiums on his benevolence. I could not even help shedding tears at the goodness of this noble lord, who no sooner perceived them, than he caught me in his arms, and hugged and kissed me with a seemingly paternal affection. Confounded at this uncommon instance of fondness for a stranger, I remained a few moments silent and ashamed, then rose and took my leave, after he had assured me that he would speak to the minister in my favour that very day; and desired that I would not for the future give myself the trouble of attending at his levee, but come at the same hour every day when he should be at leisure, that is, three times a week.

Though my hopes were now very sanguine, I determined to conceal my prospect from everybody, even from Strap, until I should be more certain of success; and, in the meantime, give my patron no respite from my solicitations. When I renewed my visit, I found the street door open to me, as if by enchantment; but, in my passage towards the presence room, I was met by the valet-de-chambre, who cast some furious looks at me, the meaning of which I

could not comprehend. The earl saluted me at entrance with a tender embrace, and wished me joy of his success with the premier, who, he said, had preferred his recommendation to that of two other noblemen very urgent in behalf of their respective friends, and absolutely promised that I should go to a certain foreign court, in quality of secretary to an ambassador and plenipotentiary, who was to set out in a few weeks, on an affair of vast importance to the nation. I was thunderstruck with my good fortune, and could make no other reply, than kneel, and attempt to kiss my benefactor's hand, which submission he would not permit, but, raising me up, pressed me to his breast with surprising emotion, and told me he had now taken upon himself the care of making my fortune. What enhanced the value of the benefit still more, was his making light of the favour, and shifting the conversation to another subject. Among other topics of discourse, that of the *Belles-Lettres* was introduced, upon which his lordship held forth with great taste and erudition, and discovered an intimate knowledge of the authors of antiquity. "Here 's a book," said he, taking one from his bosom, "written with great elegance and spirit, and though the subject may give offence to some narrow-minded people, the author will always be held in esteem by every person of wit and learning." So saying, he put into my hand Petronius Arbiter, and asked my opinion of his wit and manner. I told him, that, in my opinion, he wrote with great ease and vivacity, but was withal so lewd and indecent, that he ought to find no quarter or protection among people of morals and

taste. "I own," replied the earl, "that his taste in love is generally decried, and indeed condemned by our laws; but perhaps that may be more owing to prejudice and misapprehension, than to true reason and deliberation. The best man among the ancients is said to have entertained that passion; one of the wisest of their legislators has permitted the indulgence of it in his commonwealth; the most celebrated poets have not scrupled to avow it. At this day it prevails not only over all the East, but in most parts of Europe; in our own country it gains ground apace, and in all probability will become in a short time a more fashionable vice than simple fornication. Indeed, there is something to be said in vindication of it; for, notwithstanding the severity of the law against offenders in this way, it must be confessed that the practice of this passion is unattended with that curse and burden upon society, which proceeds from a race of miserable and deserted bastards, who are either murdered by their parents, deserted to the utmost want and wretchedness, or bred up to prey upon the commonwealth. And it likewise prevents the debauchery of many a young maiden, and the prostitution of honest men's wives; not to mention the consideration of health, which is much less liable to be impaired in the gratification of this appetite, than in the exercise of common venery, which, by ruining the constitutions of our young men, has produced a puny progeny, that degenerates from generation to generation. Nay, I have been told, that there is another motive, perhaps more powerful than all these, that induces people to cultivate this in-

clination, namely, the exquisite pleasure attending its success."

From this discourse, I began to be apprehensive that his lordship, finding I had travelled, was afraid I might have been infected with this spurious and sordid desire abroad, and took this method of sounding my sentiments on the subject. Fired at this supposed suspicion, I argued against it with great warmth, as an appetite unnatural, absurd, and of pernicious consequence; and declared my utter detestation and abhorrence of it in these lines of the satirist: —

> "Eternal infamy the wretch confound
> Who planted first that vice on British ground!
> A vice! that, 'spite of sense and nature, reigns,
> And poisons genial love, and manhood stains."

The earl smiled at my indignation, told me he was glad to find my opinion of the matter so conformable to his own, and that what he had advanced was only to provoke me to an answer, with which he professed himself perfectly well pleased.

After I had enjoyed a long audience, I happened to look at my watch, in order to regulate my motions by it; and his lordship observing the chased case, desired to see the devise, and examine the execution, which he approved, with some expressions of admiration. Considering the obligations I lay under to his lordship, I thought there could not be a fitter opportunity than the present to manifest in some shape my gratitude; I therefore begged he would do me the honour to accept of the watch as a small testimony of the sense I had of his lordship's generosity;

but he refused it in a peremptory manner, and said he was sorry I should entertain such a mercenary opinion of him, observing at the same time, that it was the most beautiful piece of workmanship he had ever seen, and desiring to know where he could have such another. I begged a thousand pardons for the freedom I had taken, which I hoped he would impute to nothing else but the highest veneration for his person; told him that, as it came to my hand by accident in France, I could give him no information about the maker, for there was no name on the inside; and once more humbly entreated that he would indulge me so far as to use it for my sake. He was still positive in refusing it, but was pleased to thank me for my generous offer, saying, it was a present that no nobleman need be ashamed receiving; though he was resolved to show his disinterestedness with regard to me, for whom he had conceived a particular friendship; and insisted, if I was willing to part with the watch, upon knowing what it had cost, that he might at least indemnify me by refunding the money. On the other hand, I assured his lordship, that I should look upon it as an uncommon mark of distinction, if he would take it without further question; and, rather than disoblige me, he was at last persuaded to put it in his pocket, to my no small satisfaction, who took my leave immediately, after having received a kind squeeze, and an injunction to depend upon his promise.

Buoyed up with this reception, my heart opened; I gave away a guinea among the lacqueys who escorted me to the door, flew to the lodgings of Lord

Straddle, upon whom I forced my diamond ring as an acknowledgment for the great service he had done me, and from hence hied me home, with an intent of sharing my happiness with honest Strap. I determined, however, to heighten his pleasure by depressing his spirits at first, and then bringing in the good news with double relish. For this purpose, I affected the appearance of disappointment and chagrin, and told him in an abrupt manner, that I had lost the watch and diamond. Poor Hugh, who had been already harassed into a consumption by intelligence of this sort, no sooner heard these words, than, unable to contain himself, he cried, with distraction in his looks, "God in heaven forbid!" I could carry on the farce no longer, but, laughing in his face, told him everything that had passed, as above recited. His features were immediately unbended, and the transition was so affecting, that he wept with joy, and called my Lord Strutwell by the appellations of Jewel, Phœnix, *Rara avis;* praising God, that there was still some virtue left among our nobility. Our mutual congratulations being over, we gave way to our imaginations, and anticipated our happiness by prosecuting our success through the different steps of promotion, till I arrived at the rank of prime minister, and he to that of my first secretary.

Intoxicated with these ideas, I went to the ordinary, where, meeting with Banter, I communicated the whole affair in confidence to him, concluding with an assurance that I would do him all the service in my power. He heard me to an end with great patience, then regarding me a good while with a look

of disdain, pronounced, "So your business is done, you think?" "As good as done, I believe," said I. "I'll tell you," replied he, "what will do it still more effectually, a halter! — 'Sdeath! if I had been such a gull to two such scoundrels as Strutwell and Straddle, I would, without any more ado, tuck myself up." Shocked at this exclamation, I desired him, with some confusion, to explain himself; upon which he gave me to understand, that Straddle was a poor contemptible wretch, who lived by borrowing and pimping for his fellow peers; that, in consequence of this last capacity, he had doubtless introduced me to Strutwell, who was so notorious for a passion for his own sex, that he was amazed his character had never reached my ears; and that, far from being able to obtain for me the post he had promised, his interest at court was so low, that he could scarce provide for a superannuated footman once a year, in the customs, or excise. That it was a common thing for him to amuse strangers whom his jackals ran down, with such assurances and caresses as he had bestowed on me, until he had stripped them of their cash, and everything valuable about them — very often of their chastity, and then leave them a prey to want and infamy. That he allowed his servants no other wages than that part of the spoil which they could glean by their industry; and the whole of his conduct towards me was so glaring, that nobody who knew anything of mankind could have been imposed upon by his insinuations.

I leave the reader to judge how I relished this piece of information, which precipitated me from the

most exalted pinnacle of hope, to the lowest abyss of despondence; and well-nigh determined me to take Banter's advice, and finish my chagrin with a halter. I had no room to suspect the veracity of my friend, because, upon recollection, I found every circumstance of Strutwell's behaviour exactly tallying with the character he had described. His hugs, embraces, squeezes, and eager looks, were now no longer a mystery, no more than his defence of Petronius, and the jealous frown of his valet-de-chambre, who, it seems, had been the favourite pathic of his lord.

not find an occasion of putting this fine scheme in execution! When I went to renew my visit to his lordship, my access to the parlour was as free as ever; but, after I had waited some time, the valet-de-chambre came in with his lordship's compliments, and a desire to see me to-morrow at his levee, he being at present so much indisposed, that he could not see company. I interpreted this message into a bad omen, and came away muttering curses against his lordship's politeness, and ready to go to loggerheads with myself for being so egregiously duped. But that I might have some satisfaction for the loss I had sustained, I besieged him closely at his levee, and persecuted him with my solicitations; not without faint hopes, indeed, of reaping something more from my industry, than the bare pleasure of making him uneasy; though I could never obtain another private hearing, during the whole course of my attendance; neither had I resolution enough to undeceive Strap, whose looks in a little time were so whetted with impatience, that, whenever I came home, his eyes devoured me, as it were, with eagerness of attention. At length, however, finding myself reduced to my last guinea, I was compelled to disclose my necessity, though I endeavoured to sweeten the discovery by rehearsing to him the daily assurances I received from my patron. But these promises were not of efficacy sufficient to support the spirits of my friend, who no sooner understood the lowness of my finances, than, uttering a dreadful groan, he exclaimed, "In the name of God, what shall we do?" In order to comfort him, I said, that many of my

acquaintance, who were in a worse condition than we, supported, notwithstanding, the character of gentlemen; and, advising him to thank God that we had as yet incurred no debt, proposed he should pawn my sword of steel inlaid with gold, and trust to my discretion for the rest. This expedient was wormwood and gall to poor Strap, who, in spite of his invincible affection for me, still retained notions of economy and expense suitable to the narrowness of his education; nevertheless, he complied with my request, and raised seven pieces on the sword in a twinkling. This supply, inconsiderable as it was, made me as happy for the present, as if I had kept five hundred pounds in bank; for by this time I was so well skilled in procrastinating every troublesome reflection, that the prospect of want seldom affected me very much, let it be ever so near. And now, indeed, it was nearer than I imagined; my landlord having occasion for money, put me in mind of my being indebted to him five guineas in lodging, and, telling me he had a sum to make up, begged I would excuse his importunity, and discharge the debt. Though I could ill spare so much cash, my pride took the resolution of disbursing it. This I did in a cavalier manner, after he had written a discharge, telling him with an air of scorn and resentment, I saw he was resolved that I should not be long in his books; while Strap, who stood by, and knew my circumstances, wrung his hands in secret, gnawed his nether lip, and turned yellow with despair. Whatever appearance of indifference my vanity enabled me to put on, I was thunderstruck with this demand, which I had no sooner satisfied,

than I hastened into company, with a view of beguiling my cares with conversation, or of drowning them with wine.

After dinner, a party was accordingly made in the coffee-house, from whence we adjourned to the tavern, where, instead of sharing the mirth of the company, I was as much chagrined at their good-humour as a damned soul in hell would be at a glimpse of heaven. In vain did I swallow bumper after bumper; the wine had lost its effect upon me, and, far from raising my dejected spirits, could not even lay me asleep. Banter, who was the only intimate I had (Strap excepted), perceived my anxiety, and, when we broke up, reproached me with pusillanimity, for being cast down at any disappointment that such a rascal as Strutwell could be the occasion of. I told him I did not at all see how Strutwell's being a rascal alleviated my misfortune; and gave him to understand, that my present grief did not so much proceed from that disappointment, as from the low ebb of my fortune, which was sunk to something less than two guineas. At this declaration, he cried, "Psha! is that all?" and assured me there was a thousand ways of living in town without a fortune, he himself having subsisted many years entirely by his wit. I expressed an eager desire of being acquainted with some of these methods; and he, without further expostulation, bade me follow him.

He conducted me to a house under the piazzas in Covent Garden, which we entered, and, having delivered our swords to a grim fellow, who demanded them at the foot of the staircase, ascended to the

second story, where I saw multitudes of people standing round two gaming tables, loaded in a manner with gold and silver. My conductor told me this was the house of a worthy Scotch lord, who, using the privilege of his peerage, had set up public gaming tables, from the profits of which he drew a comfortable livelihood. He then explained the difference between the *sitters* and the *betters;* characterised the first as old rooks, and the last as bubbles; and advised me to try my fortune at the silver table, by betting a crown at a time. Before I would venture anything, I considered the company more particularly; and there appeared such a group of villanous faces, that I was struck with horror and astonishment at the sight! I signified my surprise to Banter, who whispered in my ear, that the bulk of those present were sharpers, highwaymen, and apprentices, who, having embezzled their masters' cash, made a desperate push in this place, to make up their deficiencies. This account did not encourage me to hazard any part of my small pittance; but, at length, being teased by the importunities of my friend, who assured me there was no danger of being ill used, because people were hired by the owner to see justice done to everybody, I began by risking one shilling, and in less than an hour my winning amounted to thirty. Convinced by this time of the fairness of the game, and animated with success, there was no need of further persuasion to continue the play. I lent Banter (who seldom had any money in his pocket) a guinea, which he carried to the gold table, and lost in a moment. He would have borrowed another, but,

finding me deaf to his arguments, went away in a pet. Meanwhile, my gain advanced to six pieces, and my desire for more increased in proportion; so that I moved to the higher table, where I laid half a guinea on every throw; and fortune still favouring me, I became a sitter, in which capacity I remained until it was broad day; when I found myself, after many vicissitudes, one hundred and fifty guineas in pocket.

Thinking it now high time to retire with my booty, I asked if anybody would take my place, and made a motion to rise; upon which an old Gascon, who sat opposite to me, and of whom I had won a little money, started up with fury in his looks, crying, "*Restez, foutre, reste, il faut donner-moi mon ravanchio!*" At the same time, a Jew who sat near the other, insinuated that I was more beholden to art than fortune for what I had got; that he had observed me wipe the table very often, and that some of the divisions seemed to be greasy. This intimation produced a great deal of clamour against me, especially among the losers, who threatened with many oaths and imprecations to take me up by a warrant as a sharper, unless I would compromise the affair by refunding the greatest part of my winning. Though I was far from being easy under this accusation, I relied upon my innocence, threatened in my turn to prosecute the Jew for defamation, and boldly offered to submit my cause to the examination of any justice in Westminster; but they knew themselves too well to put their characters on that issue, and finding I was not to be intimidated into any concession, dropped their plea, and made way for me

to withdraw. I would not, however, stir from the table, until the Israelite had retracted what he had said to my disadvantage, and asked pardon before the whole assembly.

As I marched out with my prize, I happened to tread upon the toes of a tall raw-boned fellow, with a hooked nose, fierce eyes, black thick eyebrows, a pigtail wig of the same colour, and a formidable hat pulled over his forehead, who stood gnawing his fingers in the crowd, and no sooner felt the application of my shoe-heel, than he roared out in a tremendous voice, "Blood and wounds! you son of a w—e, what's that for?" I asked pardon with a great deal of submission, and protested I had no intention of hurting him. But the more I humbled myself, the more he stormed, and insisted upon gentlemanly satisfaction, at the same time provoking me with scandalous names that I could not put up with; so that I gave a loose to my passion, returned his Billingsgate, and challenged him to follow me down to the piazzas. His indignation cooling as mine warmed, he refused my invitation, saying, he would choose his own time, and returned towards the table, muttering threats, which I neither dreaded, nor distinctly heard; but descending with great deliberation, received my sword from the doorkeeper, whom I gratified with a guinea, according to the custom of that place, and went home in a rapture of joy.

My faithful valet, who had sat up all night in the utmost uneasiness on my account, let me in with his face beslubbered with tears, and followed me to my

chamber, where he stood silent like a condemned criminal, in expectation of hearing that every shilling was spent. I guessed the situation of his thoughts, and, assuming a sullen look, bade him fetch me some water to wash. He replied, without lifting his eyes from the ground, "In my simple conjecture you have more occasion for rest, not having, I suppose, slept these four-and-twenty hours." "Bring me some water," said I, in a peremptory tone; upon which he sneaked away, shrugging his shoulders. Before he returned, I had spread my whole stock on the table in the most ostentatious manner; so that, when it first saluted his view, he stood like one entranced, and, having rubbed his eyes more than once, to assure himself of his being awake, broke out into, "Lord have mercy upon us! what a vast treasure is here!" "'Tis all our own, Strap," said I; "take what is necessary, and redeem the sword immediately." He advanced towards the table, stopped short by the way, looked at the money and me by turns, and, with a wildness in his countenance, produced from joy checked by distrust, cried, "I dare say it is honestly come by." To remove his scruples, I made him acquainted with the whole story of my success, which when he heard, he danced about the room in an ecstasy, crying, "God be praised! a white stone! — God be praised! a white stone!" so that I was afraid the sudden change of fortune had disordered his intellects, and that he was run mad with joy. Extremely concerned at this event, I attempted to reason him out of his frenzy, but to no purpose; for, without regarding

what I said, he continued to frisk up and down, and repeat his rhapsody of "God be praised! a white stone!" At last I rose in the utmost consternation, and, laying violent hands upon him, put a stop to his extravagance, by fixing him down to a settee that was in the room. This constraint banished his delirium; he started, as if just awoke, and, terrified at my behaviour, cried, "What is the matter?" When he learned the cause of my apprehension, he was ashamed of his transports, and told me that in mentioning the white stone, he alluded to the *dies fasti* of the Romans, *albo lapide notati.*

Having no inclination to sleep, I secured my cash, dressed, and was just going abroad, when the servant of the house told me there was a gentlewoman at the door, who wanted to speak with me. Surprised at this information, I bade Strap show her up, and in less than a minute saw a young woman of a shabby, decayed appearance enter my room. After half a dozen curtseys, she began to sob, and told me her name was Gawky; upon which information I immediately recollected the features of Miss Lavement, who had been the first occasion of my misfortunes. Though I had all the reason in the world to resent her treacherous behaviour to me, I was moved at her distress, and professing my sorrow at seeing her so reduced, desired her to sit, and inquired into the particulars of her situation. She fell upon her knees, and implored my forgiveness for the injuries she had done me, protesting before God, that she was forced, against her inclination, into that hellish conspiracy which had almost deprived me of my life, by the

entreaties of her husband, who, having been afterwards renounced by his father, on account of his marriage with her, and unable to support a family on his pay, left his wife at her father's house, and went with the regiment to Germany, where he was broke for misbehaviour at the battle of Dettingen, since which time she had heard no tidings of him. She then gave me to understand, with many symptoms of penitence, that it was her misfortune to bear a child four months after marriage, by which event her parents were so incensed, that she was turned out of doors with the infant, that died soon after; and had hitherto subsisted in a miserable indigent manner, on the extorted charity of a few friends, who were now quite tired of giving. That, not knowing where or how to support herself one day longer, she had fled for succour even to me, who, of all mankind, had the least cause to assist her, relying upon the generosity of my disposition, which, she hoped, would be pleased with this opportunity of avenging itself in the noblest manner on the wretch who had wronged me. I was very much affected with her discourse, and having no cause to suspect the sincerity of her repentance, raised her up, freely pardoned all she had done against me, and promised to befriend her as much as lay in my power.

Since my last arrival in London, I had made no advances to the apothecary, imagining it would be impossible for me to make my innocence appear, so unhappily was my accusation circumstanced. Strap indeed had laboured to justify me to the school-

master; but, far from succeeding in his attempt, Mr. Concordance dropped all correspondence with him, because he refused to quit his connexion with me. Things being in this situation, I thought a fairer opportunity of vindicating my character could not offer than that which now presented itself. I therefore stipulated with Mrs. Gawky, that, before I would yield her the least assistance, she should do me the justice to clear my reputation, by explaining upon oath, before a magistrate, the whole of the conspiracy, as it had been executed against me. When she had given me this satisfaction, I presented her with five guineas, a sum so much above her expectation, that she could scarce believe the evidence of her senses, and was ready to worship me for my benevolence. The declaration, signed with her own hand, I sent to her father, who, upon recollecting and comparing the circumstances of my charge, was convinced of my integrity, and waited on me next day, in company with his friend the schoolmaster, to whom he had communicated my vindication. After mutual salutation, Monsieur Lavement began a long apology for the unjust treatment I had received; but I saved him a good deal of breath, by interrupting his harangue, and assuring him, that, far from entertaining a resentment against him, I thought myself obliged to his lenity, which allowed me to escape, after such strong presumptions of guilt appeared against me. Mr. Concordance, thinking it now his turn to speak, observed, that Mr. Random had too much candour and sagacity to be disobliged at their conduct, which, all things considered, could

not have been otherwise, with any honesty of intention. "Indeed," said he, "if the plot had been unravelled to us by any supernatural intelligence, if it had been whispered by a genie, communicated by a dream, or revealed by an angel from on high, we should have been to blame in crediting ocular demonstration: but, as we are left in the midst of mortality, it cannot be expected we should be incapable of imposition. I do assure you, Mr. Random, no man on earth is more pleased than I am at this triumph of your character; and, as the news of your misfortune panged me to the very entrails, this manifestation of your innocence makes my midriff quiver with joy." I thanked him for his concern, desired them to undeceive those of their acquaintance who judged harshly of me, and, having treated them with a glass of wine, represented to Lavement the deplorable condition of his daughter, and pleaded her cause so effectually, that he consented to settle a small annuity on her for life; but could not be persuaded to take her home, because her mother was so much incensed that she would never see her.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

I PURCHASE NEW CLOTHES — REPRIMAND STRUTWELL AND STRADDLE — BANTER PROPOSES ANOTHER MATRIMONIAL SCHEME — I ACCEPT OF HIS TERMS — SET OUT FOR BATH IN A STAGE COACH, WITH THE YOUNG LADY AND HER MOTHER — THE BEHAVIOUR OF AN OFFICER AND LAWYER — OUR FELLOW-TRAVELLERS DESCRIBED — A SMART DIALOGUE BETWEEN MY MISTRESS AND THE CAPTAIN.

HAVING finished this affair to my satisfaction, I found myself perfectly at ease, and, looking upon the gaming-table as a certain resource for a gentleman in want, became more gay than ever. Although my clothes were almost as good as new, I grew ashamed of wearing them, because I thought everybody, by this time, had got an inventory of my wardrobe. For which reason I disposed of a good part of my apparel to a salesman in Monmouth Street for half the value, and bought two new suits with the money. I likewise purchased a plain gold watch, despairing of recovering that which I had so foolishly given to Strutwell, whom, notwithstanding, I still continued to visit at his levee, until the ambassador he had mentioned set out with a secretary of his own choosing. I thought myself then at liberty to expostulate

with his lordship, whom I treated with great freedom in a letter, for amusing me with vain hopes, when he neither had the power nor inclination to provide for me. Nor was I less reserved with Straddle, whom I in person reproached for misrepresenting to me the character of Strutwell, which I did not scruple to aver was infamous in every respect. He seemed very much enraged at my freedom, talked a great deal about his quality and honour, and began to make some comparisons which I thought so injurious to mine, that I demanded an explanation with great warmth; and he was mean enough to equivocate, and condescend in such a manner, that I left him with a hearty contempt of his behaviour.

About this time, Banter, who had observed a surprising and sudden alteration in my appearance and disposition, began to inquire very minutely into the cause; and as I did not think fit to let him know the true state of the affair, lest he might make free with my purse, on the strength of having proposed the scheme that filled it, I told him that I had received a small supply from a relation in the country, who at the same time had promised to use all his interest, which was not small, in soliciting some post for me that should make me easy for life. "If that be the case," said Banter, "perhaps you won't care to mortify yourself a little, in making your fortune another way. I have a relation who is to set out for Bath next week, with an only daughter, who, being sickly and decrepit, intends to drink the waters for the recovery of her health. Her father, who was a rich Turkey merchant, died about a year ago, and left her

with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, under the sole management of her mother, who is my kinswoman. I would have put in for the plate myself, but there is a breach at present between the old woman and me. You must know, that some time ago I borrowed a small sum of her, and promised, it seems, to pay it before a certain time; but, being disappointed in my expectation of money from the country, the day elapsed without my being able to take up my note; upon which she wrote a peremptory letter, threatening to arrest me, if I did not pay the debt immediately. Nettled at this precise behaviour, I sent a d—ned severe answer, which enraged her so much that she actually took out a writ against me. Whereupon, finding the thing grow serious, I got a friend to advance the money for me, discharged the debt, went to her house, and abused her for her unfriendly dealing. She was provoked by my reproaches, and scolded in her turn. The little deformed urchin joined her mother with such virulence and volubility of tongue, that I was fain to make my retreat, after having been honoured with a great many scandalous epithets, which gave me plainly to understand that I had nothing to hope from the esteem of the one, or the affection of the other. As they are both utter strangers to life, it is a thousand to one that the girl will be picked up by some scoundrel or other at Bath, if I don't provide for her otherwise. You are a well-looking fellow, Random, and can behave as demurely as a Quaker. Now, if you will give me an obligation for five hundred pounds to be paid six months after your marriage, I will

put you in a method of carrying her in spite of all opposition."

This proposal was too advantageous for me to be refused. The writing was immediately drawn up and executed; and Banter giving me notice of the time when, and the stage coach in which they were to set out, I bespoke a place in the same convenience, and having hired a horse for Strap, who was charmed with the prospect, set forward accordingly.

As we embarked before day, I had not the pleasure for some time of seeing Miss Snapper (that was the name of my mistress), nor even of perceiving the number and sex of my fellow-travellers, although I guessed that the coach was full, by the difficulty I found in seating myself. The first five minutes passed in a general silence, when, all of a sudden, the coach heeling to one side, a boisterous voice pronounced, "To the right and left, cover your flanks, d—me! whiz!" I easily discovered by the tone and matter of this exclamation, that it was uttered by a son of Mars; neither was it hard to conceive the profession of another person who sat opposite to me, and observed, that we ought to have been well satisfied of the security before we entered upon the premises. These two sallies had not the desired effect. We continued a good while as mute as before, till at length the gentleman of the sword, impatient of longer silence, made a second effort, by swearing he had got into a meeting of Quakers. "I believe so, too," said a shrill voice at my left hand, "for the spirit of folly begins to move." "Out with it, then, madam," replied the soldier. "You seem to have no

occasion for a midwife," cried the lady. "D—n my blood!" exclaimed the other, "a man can't talk to a woman, but she immediately thinks of a midwife." "True, sir," said she, "I long to be delivered." "What! of a mouse, madam?" said he. "No, sir," said she, "of a fool." "Are you far gone with a fool?" said he. "Little more than two miles," said she. "By Gad, you are a wit, madam!" cried the officer. "I wish I could with any justice return the compliment," said the lady. "Zounds, I have done," said he. "Your bolt is soon shot, according to the old proverb," said she. The warrior's powder was quite spent; the lawyer advised him to drop the prosecution; and a grave matron, who sat on the left hand of the victorious wit, told her, she must not let her tongue run so fast among strangers.

This reprimand, softened with the appellation of *child*, convinced me that the satirical lady was no other than Miss Snapper, and I resolved to regulate my conduct accordingly. The champion, finding himself so smartly handled, changed his battery, and began to expatiate on his own exploits. "You talk of shot, madam," said he, "d—me! I have both given and received some shot in my time. I was wounded in the shoulder by a pistol-ball at Dettingen, where — I say nothing — but by G—d! if it had not been for me — all 's one for that — I despise boasting, d—me! whiz!" So saying, he whistled one part and hummed another of [the] Black Joke; then, addressing himself to the lawyer, went on thus: "Would n't you think it d—ned hard, after having,

at the risk of your life, recovered the standard of a regiment, that had been lost, to receive no preferment for your pains! I don't choose to name no names, sink me! but howsomever, this I will refer, by G—d; and that is this, a musketeer of the French guards, having taken a standard from a certain cornet of a certain regiment, d—me! was retreating with his prize as fast as his horse's heels could carry him, sink me! Upon which I snatched up a firelock that belonged to a dead man, d—me! whiz! and shot his horse under him, d—n my blood! The fellow got upon his feet, and began to repose me; upon which I charged my bayonet breast high, and ran him through the body, by G—d! One of his comrades coming to his assistance, shot me in the shoulder, as I told you before; another gave me a confusion on the head with the butt-end of his carbine; but, d—me! that did not signify. I killed one, put the other to flight, and, taking up the standard, carried it off very deliberately. But the best joke of all was, the son of a b—h of a cornet who had surrendered it in a cowardly manner, seeing it in my possession, demanded it from me, in the front of the line. 'D—n my blood,' says he, 'where did you find my standard?' says he. 'D—n my blood,' said I, 'where,' said I, 'did you lose it?' said I. 'That's nothing to you,' says he—''t is my standard,' says he, 'and by G—d I'll have it,' says he. 'D—tion seize me,' says I, 'if you shall,' says I, 'till I have first delivered it to the general,' says I; and accordingly I went to the headquarters, after the battle, and delivered it to my Lord Stair, who promised to do for

me, but I am no more than a poor lieutenant still, d—n my blood."

Having vented this repetition of expletives, the lawyer owned he had not been requited according to his desert; observed, that the labourer is always worthy of his hire, and asked if the promise was made before witnesses, because in that case the law would compel the general to perform it; — but understanding that the promise was made over a bottle, without being restricted to time or terms, he pronounced it not valid in law, proceeded to inquire into the particulars of the battle, and affirmed, that although the English had drawn themselves into a premunire at first, the French managed their cause so lamely in the course of the dispute, that they would have been utterly nonsuited, had they not obtained a *noli prosequi*. In spite of these enlivening touches, the conversation was likely to suffer another long interruption; when the lieutenant, unwilling to conceal any of his accomplishments that could be displayed in his present situation, offered to regale the company with a song; and, interpreting our silence into a desire of hearing, began to warble a fashionable air, the first stanza of which he pronounced thus:

Would you task the moon-ty'd hair,
To yon flagrant beau repair;
Where waving with the popling vow,
The bantling fine will shelter you, etc.

The sense of the rest he perverted as he went on, with such surprising facility, that I could not help thinking he had been at some pains to burlesque the performance. Miss Snapper ascribed it to the true

cause, namely ignorance; and when he asked her how she relished his music, answered, that, in her opinion, the music and the words were much of a piece. "O d—n my blood!" said he, "I take that as a high compliment; for everybody allows the words are d—nable fine." "They may be so," replied the lady, "for aught I know, but they are above my comprehension." "I an't obliged to find you comprehension, madam, curse me!" cried he. "No, nor to speak sense neither," said she. "D—n my heart," said he, "I'll speak what I please." Here the lawyer interposed, by telling him there were some things he must not speak. And, upon being defied to give an instance, mentioned treason and defamation. "As for the King," cried the soldier, "God bless him — I eat his bread, and have lost blood in his cause, therefore I have nothing to say to him — but, by G—d, I dare say anything to any other man." "No," said the lawyer, "you dare not call me a rogue." "D—me, for what?" said the other. "Because," replied the counsellor, "I should have a good action against you, and recover." "Well, well," cried the officer, "if I dare not call you a rogue, I dare think you one, d—me." This stroke of wit he accompanied with a loud laugh of self-approbation, which unluckily did not affect the audience, but effectually silenced his antagonist, who did not open his mouth for the space of an hour, except to clear his pipe with three *hems*, which, however, produced nothing.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

DAY BREAKING, I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF VIEWING THE PERSON OF MISS SNAPPER, WHOM I HAD NOT SEEN BEFORE — THE SOLDIER IS WITTY UPON ME — IS OFFENDED — TALKS MUCH OF HIS VALOUR — IS REPRIMANDED BY A GRAVE GENTLEWOMAN — WE ARE ALARMED WITH THE CRY OF HIGHWAYMEN — I GET OUT OF THE COACH, AND STAND IN MY OWN DEFENCE — THEY RIDE OFF WITHOUT HAVING ATTACKED US — I PURSUE THEM — ONE OF THEM IS THROWN FROM HIS HORSE AND TAKEN — I RETURN TO THE COACH — AM COMPLIMENTED BY MISS SNAPPER — THE CAPTAIN'S BEHAVIOUR ON THIS OCCASION — THE PRUDE REPROACHES ME IN A SOLILOQUY — I UPBRAID HER IN THE SAME MANNER — THE BEHAVIOUR OF MRS. SNAPPER AT BREAKFAST DISOBLIGES ME — THE LAWYER IS WITTY UPON THE OFFICER, WHO THREATENS HIM.

IN the meantime, day breaking in upon us, discovered to one another the faces of their fellow-travellers, and I had the good fortune to find my mistress not quite so deformed nor disagreeable as she had been represented to me. Her head, indeed, bore some resemblance to a hatchet, the edge being represented by her face; but she had a certain delicacy in her complexion, and a great deal of vivacity in her eyes, which were very large and black; and though the protuberance of her breast,

when considered alone, seemed to drag her forwards, it was easy to perceive an equivalent on her back which balanced the other, and kept her body in equilibrio. On the whole, I thought I should have great reason to congratulate myself, if it should be my fate to possess twenty thousand pounds encumbered with such a wife. I began therefore to deliberate about the most probable means of acquiring the conquest, and was so much engrossed by this idea, that I scarce took any notice of the rest of the people in the coach, but revolved my project in silence; while the conversation was maintained as before, by the object of my hopes, the son of Mars, and the barrister, who by this time had recollected himself, and talked in terms as much as ever.

At length a dispute happened, which ended in a wager, to be determined by me, who was so much absorbed in contemplation, that I neither heard the reference nor the question, which was put to me by each in his turn; affronted at my supposed contempt, the soldier, with great vociferation, swore, I was either dumb or deaf, if not both, and that I looked as if I could not say Boh to a goose. Aroused at this observation, I fixed my eyes upon him, and pronounced with emphasis the interjection *Boh!* Upon which he cocked his hat in a fierce manner, and cried, "D—me, sir, what d'ye mean by that?" Had I intended to answer him, which by the bye was not my design, I should have been anticipated by Miss, who told him, my meaning was to show that I could cry Boh to a goose; and laughed very heartily at my laconic reproof. Her explanation and mirth did not

help to appease his wrath, which broke out in several martial insinuations, such as — "I do not understand such freedoms, d—me! D—n my blood! I'm a gentleman, and bear the King's commission. 'Sblood! some people deserve to have their noses pulled for their impertinence." I thought to have checked these ejaculations by a frown; because he had talked so much of his valour, that I had long ago rated him as an ass in a lion's skin; but this expedient did not answer my expectation; he took umbrage at the contraction of my brows, swore he did not value my sulky looks a fig's end, and protested he feared no man breathing. Miss Snapper said she was very glad to find herself in company with a man of so much courage, who, she did not doubt, would protect us from all attempts of highwaymen during our journey. "Make yourself perfectly easy on that head, madam," replied the officer; "I have got a pair of pistols (here they are) which I took from a horse officer at the battle of Dettingen — they are double loaded, and if any highwayman in England robs you of the value of a pin, while I have the honour of being in your company, d—n my heart."

When he had expressed himself in this manner, a prim gentlewoman, who had sat silent hitherto, opened her mouth, and said, she wondered how any man could be so rude as to pull out such weapons before ladies. "D—me, madam," cried the champion, "if you are so much afraid at sight of a pistol, how d'ye propose to stand fire if there should be occasion?" She then told him, that if she thought he could be so unmannerly as to use firearms in her

presence, whatever might be the occasion, she would get out of the coach immediately, and walk to the next village, where she might procure a convenience to herself. Before he could make any answer, my Dulcinea interposed, and observed, that, far from being offended at a gentleman's using his arms in his own defence, she thought herself very lucky in being along with one by whose valour she stood a good chance of saving herself from being rifled. The prude cast a disdainful look at Miss, and said, that people who have but little to lose are sometimes the most solicitous about preserving it. The old lady was affronted at this innuendo, and took notice, that people ought to be very well informed before they spoke slightingly of other people's fortunes, lest they discover their own envy, and make themselves ridiculous. The daughter declared, that she did not pretend to vie with anybody in point of riches; and, if the lady who insisted upon non-resistance would promise to indemnify us for all the loss we should sustain, she would be one of the first to persuade the captain to submission, in case we should be attacked. To this proposal, reasonable as it was, the reserved lady made no other reply, than a scornful glance and a toss of her head.

I was very well pleased with the spirit of my mistress; and even wished for an opportunity of distinguishing my courage under her eye, which I believed could not fail of prepossessing her in my favour; when, all of a sudden, Strap rode up to the coach door, and told us in a great fright, that two men on horseback were crossing the heath (for by this time

we had passed Hounslow), and made directly towards us. This piece of information was no sooner delivered than Mrs. Snapper began to scream, her daughter grew pale, the other lady pulled out her purse to be in readiness, the lawyer's teeth chattered, while he pronounced, "'T is no matter — we 'll sue the county, and recover." The captain gave evident signs of confusion; and I, after having commanded the coachman to stop, opened the door, jumped out, and invited the warrior to follow me. But, finding him backward and astonished, I took his pistols, and, giving them to Strap, who had by this time alighted, and trembled very much, I mounted on horseback, and, taking my own, which I could better depend upon, from the holsters, cocked them both, and faced the robbers, who were now very near us. Seeing me ready to oppose them on horseback, and another man armed a-foot, they made a halt at some distance to reconnoitre us, and, after having rode round us twice, myself still facing about as they rode, went off the same way as they came, at a hand-gallop. A gentleman's servant coming up with a horse at the same time, I offered him a crown to assist me in pursuing them: which he no sooner accepted, than I armed him with the officer's pistols, and we galloped after the thieves, who, trusting to the swiftness of their horses, stopped till we came within shot of them, and then firing at us, put their nags to the full speed. We followed them as fast as our beasts could carry us; but not being so well mounted as they, our efforts would have been to little purpose, had not the horse of one of them stumbled, and thrown his rider with such violence

over his head, that he lay senseless when we came up, and was taken without the least opposition; while his comrade consulted his own safety in flight, without regarding the distress of his friend. We scarce had time to make ourselves masters of his arms, and tie his hands together, before he recovered his senses, when, learning his situation, he affected surprise, demanded to know by what authority we used a gentleman in that manner, and had the impudence to threaten us with a prosecution for robbery. In the meantime, we perceived Strap coming up with a crowd of people, armed with different kinds of weapons; and among the rest a farmer, who no sooner perceived the thief, whom we had secured, than he cried with great emotion, "There's the fellow who robbed me an hour ago of twenty pounds in a canvas bag." He was immediately searched, and the money found exactly as it had been described. Upon which we committed him to the charge of the countryman, who carried him to the town of Hounslow, which it seems the farmer had alarmed; and I, having satisfied the footman for his trouble, according to promise, returned with Strap to the coach, where I found the captain and lawyer busy in administering smelling bottles and cordials to the grave lady, who had gone into a fit at the noise of the firing.

When I had taken my seat, Miss Snapper, who from the coach had seen everything that happened, made me a compliment on my behaviour, and said, she was glad to see me returned, without having received any injury: her mother too owned herself obliged to my resolution; and the lawyer told me,

that I was entitled by act of parliament to a reward of forty pounds, for having apprehended a highwayman. The soldier observed, with a countenance in which impudence and shame struggling produced some disorder, that if I had not been in such a d—d hurry to get out of the coach, he would have secured the rogues effectually, without all this bustle and loss of time, by a scheme which my heat and precipitation ruined. "For my own part," continued he, "I am always extremely cool on these occasions." "So it appeared, by your trembling," said the young lady. "Death and d—tion," cried he, "your sex protects you, madam; if any man on earth durst tell me so much, I'd send him to hell, d—n my heart! in an instant." So saying, he fixed his eyes upon me, and asked if I had seen him tremble? I answered without hesitation, "Yes." "D—n me, sir," said he, "d'ye doubt my courage?" I replied, "Very much." This declaration quite disconcerted him. He looked blank, and pronounced with a faltering voice, "O! 't is very well — d—n my blood! I shall find a time." I signified my contempt of him, by thrusting my tongue in my cheek, which humbled him so much, that he scarce swore another oath aloud during the whole journey.

The precise lady, having recruited her spirits by the help of some strong waters, began a soliloquy, in which she wondered that any man, who pretended to maintain the character of a gentleman, could, for the sake of a little paltry coin, throw persons of honour into such quandaries as might endanger their lives; and professed her surprise, that women

were not ashamed to commend such brutality; at the same time vowing, that for the future she would never set foot in a stage-coach, if a private convenience could be had for love or money.

Nettled at her remarks, I took the same method of conveying my sentiments, and wondered in my turn that any woman of common sense should be so unreasonable as to expect that people who had neither acquaintance or connexion with her, would tamely allow themselves to be robbed and maltreated, merely to indulge her capricious humour. I likewise confessed my astonishment at her insolence and ingratitude in taxing a person with brutality, who deserved her approbation and acknowledgment; and vowed, that if ever she should be assaulted again, I would leave her to the mercy of the spoiler, that she might know the value of my protection.

This person of honour did not think fit to carry on the altercation any farther, but seemed to chew the cud of her resentment, with the crest-fallen captain, while I entered into discourse with my charmer, who was the more pleased with my conversation, as she had conceived a very indifferent opinion of my intellects from my former silence. I should have had cause to be equally satisfied with the sprightliness of her genius, could she have curbed her imagination with judgment; but she laboured under such a profusion of talk, that I dreaded her unruly tongue, and felt by anticipation the horrors of an eternal clack! However, when I considered, on the other hand, the joys attending the possession of

twenty thousand pounds, I forgot her imperfections, seized occasion by the forelock, and endeavoured to insinuate myself into her affection. The careful mother kept a strict watch over her, and, though she could not help behaving civilly to me, took frequent opportunities of discouraging our communication, by reprimanding her for being so free with strangers, and telling her she must learn to speak less, and think more. Abridged of the use of speech, we conversed with our eyes, and I found the young lady very eloquent in this kind of discourse. In short, I had reason to believe that she was sick of the old gentlewoman's tuition, and that I should find it no difficult matter to supersede her authority.

When we arrived at the place where we were to breakfast, I alighted, and helped my mistress out of the coach, as well as her mother, who called for a private room, to which they withdrew, in order to eat by themselves. As they retired together, I perceived that Miss had got more twists from nature, than I had before observed, for she was bent sideways in the figure like an S, so that her progression very much resembled that of a crab. The prude also chose the captain for her messmate, and ordered breakfast for two only to be brought into another separate room; while the lawyer and I, deserted by the rest of the company, were fain to put up with each other. I was a good deal chagrined at the stately reserve of Mrs. Snapper, who I thought did not use me with all the complaisance I deserved; and my companion declared, that he had been a traveller for twenty years, and never knew the

stage-coach rules so much infringed before. As for the honourable gentlewoman, I could not conceive the meaning of her attachment to the lieutenant; and asked the lawyer if he knew for which of the soldier's virtues she admired him? The counsellor facetiously replied, "I suppose the lady knows him to be an able conveyancer, and wants him to make a settlement in tail." I could not help laughing at the archness of the barrister, who entertained me during breakfast with a great deal of wit of the same kind, at the expense of our fellow-travellers; and among other things said, he was sorry to find the young lady saddled with such encumbrances.

When we had made an end of our repast, and paid our reckoning, we went into the coach, took our places, and bribed the driver with sixpence, to revenge us on the rest of his fare, by hurrying them away in the midst of their meal. This task he performed to our satisfaction, after he had disturbed their enjoyment with his importunate clamour. The mother and daughter obeyed the summons first, and coming to the coach door, were obliged to desire the coachman's assistance to get in, because the lawyer and I had agreed to show our resentment by our neglect. They were no sooner seated, than the captain appeared, as much heated as if he had been pursued a dozen miles by an enemy; and immediately after him came the lady, not without some marks of disorder. Having helped her up, he entered himself, growling a few oaths against the coachman, for his impertinent interruption; and the lawyer comforted him by saying, that if he had suffered a *nisi prius* through the

obstinacy of the defendant, he might have an opportunity to join issue at the next stage. This last expression gave offence to the grave gentlewoman, who told him, if she was a man, she would make him repent of such obscenity, and thanked God she had never been in such company before. At this insinuation, the captain thought himself under a necessity of espousing the lady's cause; and accordingly threatened to cut off the lawyer's ears, if he should give his tongue any such liberties for the future. The poor counsellor begged pardon, and universal silence ensued.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

I RESOLVE TO INGRATIATE MYSELF WITH THE MOTHER, AND AM FAVOURED BY ACCIDENT — THE PRECISE LADY FINDS HER HUSBAND, AND QUITS THE COACH — THE CAPTAIN IS DISAPPOINTED OF HIS DINNER — WE ARRIVE AT BATH — I ACCOMPANY MISS SNAPPER TO THE LONG ROOM, WHERE SHE IS ATTACKED BY BEAU NASH, AND TURNS THE LAUGH AGAINST HIM — I MAKE LOVE TO HER, AND RECEIVE A CHECK — SQUIRE HER TO AN ASSEMBLY, WHERE I AM BLESSED WITH A SIGHT OF MY DEAR NARCISSA, WHICH DISCOMPOSES ME SO MUCH, THAT MISS SNAPPER, OBSERVING MY DISORDER, IS AT PAINS TO DISCOVER THE CAUSE — IS PIQUED AT THE OCCASION, AND, IN OUR WAY HOME, PAYS ME A SARCASTIC COMPLIMENT — I AM MET BY MISS WILLIAMS, WHO IS MAID AND CONFIDANT OF NARCISSA — SHE ACQUAINTS ME WITH HER LADY'S REGARD FOR ME WHILE UNDER THE DISGUISE OF A SERVANT, AND DESCRIBES THE TRANSPORTS OF NARCISSA ON SEEING ME AT THE ASSEMBLY IN THE CHARACTER OF A GENTLEMAN — I AM SURPRISED WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HER AUNT'S MARRIAGE, AND MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET MISS WILLIAMS NEXT DAY.

DURING this unsocial interval, my pride and interest maintained a severe conflict on the subject of Miss Snapper, whom the one represented as unworthy of notice, and the other proposed as the object of my whole attention: the advantages and disadvantages

attending such a match were opposed to one another by my imagination; and at length my judgment gave it so much in favour of the first, that I resolved to prosecute my scheme with all the address in my power. I thought I perceived some concern in her countenance, occasioned by my silence, which she, no doubt, imputed to my disgust at her mother's behaviour; and as I believed the old woman could not fail of ascribing my muteness to the same motive, I determined to continue that sullen conduct towards her, and fall upon some other method of manifesting my esteem for the daughter: nor was it difficult for me to make her acquainted with my sentiments by the expression of my looks, which I modelled into the characters of humility and love; and which were answered by her with all the sympathy and approbation I could desire. But when I began to consider, that without further opportunities of improving my success, all the progress I had hitherto made would not much avail, and that such opportunities could not be enjoyed without the mother's permission; I concluded it would be requisite to vanquish her coldness and suspicion by my assiduities and respectful behaviour on the road; and she would in all likelihood invite me to visit her at Bath, where I did not fear of being able to cultivate her acquaintance as much as would be necessary to the accomplishment of my purpose. And indeed accident furnished me with an opportunity of obliging her so much, that she could not, with any appearance of good manners, forbear to gratify my inclination.

When we arrived at our dining-place, we found all

the eatables in the inn bespoke by a certain nobleman, who had got the start of us; and in all likelihood my mistress and her mother must have dined with Duke Humphrey, had I not exerted myself in their behalf, and bribed the landlord with a glass of wine, to curtail his lordship's entertainment of a couple of fowls and some bacon, which I sent with my compliments to the ladies. They accepted my treat with a great many thanks, and desired I would favour them with my company at dinner, where I amused the old gentlewoman so successfully, by maintaining a seemingly disinterested ease in the midst of my civility, that she signified a desire of being better acquainted, and hoped I would be so kind as to see her sometimes at Bath. While I enjoyed myself in this manner, the precise lady had the good fortune to meet with her husband, who was no other than gentleman, or, in other words, valet-de-chambre, to the very nobleman whose coach stood at the door. Proud of the interest she had in the house, she affected to show her power by introducing the captain to her spouse, as a person who had treated her with great civility; upon which he was invited to a share of their dinner; while the poor lawyer, finding himself utterly abandoned, made application to me, and was, through my intercession, admitted into our company. Having satisfied our appetites, and made ourselves merry at the expense of the person of honour, the civil captain, and complaisant husband, I did myself the pleasure of discharging the bill by stealth, for which I received a great many apologies and acknowledgments from my guests, and we

re-embarked at the first warning. The officer was obliged, at last, to appease his hunger with a luncheon of bread and cheese, and a pint bottle of brandy which he dispatched in the coach, cursing the inappetence of his lordship, who had ordered dinner to be put back a whole hour.

Nothing remarkable happened during the remaining part of our journey, which was finished next day, when I waited on the ladies to the house of a relation, in which they intended to lodge; and, passing that night at the inn, took lodgings in the morning for myself.

The forenoon was spent in visiting everything that was worth seeing in the place, in company with a gentleman to whom Banter had given me a letter of introduction; and in the afternoon I waited on the ladies, and found Miss a good deal indisposed with the fatigue of the journey. As they foresaw they should have occasion for a male acquaintance to squire them at all public places, I was received with great cordiality, and had the mother's commission to conduct them next day to the Long Room, which we no sooner entered, than the eyes of everybody present were turned upon us; and when we had suffered the martyrdom of their looks for some time, a whisper circulated at our expense, which was accompanied with many contemptuous smiles and tittering observations, to my utter shame and confusion. I did not so much conduct as follow my charge to a place where she seated her mother and herself with astonishing composure, notwithstanding the unmannerly behaviour of the whole company, which seemed

to be assumed merely to put her out of countenance. The celebrated Mr. Nash, who commonly attends in this place, as master of the ceremonies, perceiving the disposition of the assembly, took upon himself the task of gratifying their ill-nature still further, by exposing my mistress to the edge of his wit. With this view he approached us, with many bows and grimaces, and, after having welcomed Miss Snapper to the place, asked her, in the hearing of all present, if she could inform him the name of Tobit's dog. I was so much incensed at his insolence that I should certainly have kicked him where he stood, without ceremony, had not the young lady prevented the effects of my indignation, by replying, with the utmost vivacity, "His name was Nash, and an impudent dog he was."

This repartee, so unexpected and just, raised such an universal laugh at the aggressor, that all his assurance was insufficient to support him under their derision; so that, after he had endeavoured to compose himself, by taking snuff, and forcing a smile, he was obliged to sneak off in a very ludicrous attitude; while my Dulcinea was applauded to the skies, for the brilliancy of her wit, and her acquaintance immediately courted by the best people of both sexes in the room. This event, with which I was infinitely pleased at first, did not fail of alarming me, upon further reflection, when I considered, that the more she was caressed by persons of distinction, the more her pride would be inflamed, and, consequently, the obstacles to my success multiplied and enlarged. Nor were my presaging fears untrue.

That very night I perceived her a little intoxicated with the incense she had received; and, though she still behaved with a particular civility to me, I foresaw, that, as soon as her fortune should be known, she would be surrounded with a swarm of admirers, some one of whom might possibly, by excelling me in point of wealth, or in the arts of flattery and scandal, supplant me in her esteem, and find means to make the mother of his party. I resolved therefore to lose no time, and, being invited to spend the evening with them, found an opportunity, in spite of the old gentlewoman's vigilance, to explain the meaning of my glances in the coach, by paying homage to her wit, and professing myself enamoured of her person. She blushed at my declaration, and in a favourable manner disapproved of the liberty I had taken, putting me in mind of our being strangers to each other, and desiring I would not be the means of interrupting our acquaintance by any such unseasonable strokes of gallantry for the future. My ardour was effectually checked by this reprimand, which was, however, delivered in such a gentle manner that I had no cause to be disobliged; and the arrival of her mother relieved me from a dilemma, in which I should not have known how to demean myself a minute longer. Neither could I resume the easiness of carriage with which I came in. My mistress acted on the reserve, and the conversation beginning to flag, the old lady introduced her kinswoman of the house, and proposed a hand at whist.

While we amused ourselves at this diversion, I

understood from the gentlewoman, that there was to be an assembly next night, at which I begged to have the honour of dancing with Miss. She thanked me for the favour I intended her, assured me she never did dance, but signified a desire of seeing the company; when I offered my service, which was accepted; not a little proud of being exempted from appearing with her, in a situation, that, notwithstanding my profession to the contrary, was not at all agreeable to my inclination.

Having supped, and continued the game, till such time as the successive yawns of the mother warned me to be gone, I took my leave, and went home, where I made Strap very happy with an account of my progress. Next day I put on my gayest apparel, and went to drink tea at Mrs. Snapper's according to appointment, when I found, to my inexpressible satisfaction, that she was laid up with the toothache, and that Miss was to be intrusted to my care. Accordingly, we set out for the ball-room pretty early in the evening, and took possession of a commodious place, where we had not sat longer than a quarter of an hour, when a gentleman dressed in a green frock came in, leading a young lady, whom I immediately discovered to be the adorable Narcissa! Good Heaven! what were the thrillings of my soul at that instant! my reflection was overwhelmed with a torrent of agitation! my heart throbbed with surprising violence! a sudden mist overspread my eyes! my ears were invaded with a dreadful sound! I paused for want of breath, and, in short, was for some moments entranced! This first tumult sub-

siding, a crowd of flattering ideas rushed upon my imagination. Everything that was soft, sensible, and engaging in the character of that dear creature, recurred to my remembrance, and every favourable circumstance of my own qualifications appeared in all the aggravation of self-conceit, to heighten my expectation! Neither was this transport of long duration. The dread of her being already disposed of intervened, and overcast my enchanting reverie! My presaging apprehension represented her encircled in the arms of some happy rival, and of consequence for ever lost to me! I was stung with this suggestion, and, believing the person who conducted her to be the husband of this amiable young lady, already devoted him to my fury, and stood up to mark him for my vengeance; when I recollected, to my unspeakable joy, her brother, the fox-hunter, in the person of her gallant.

Undeceived so much to my satisfaction in this particular, I gazed, in a frenzy of delight, on the irresistible charms of his sister, who no sooner distinguished me in the crowd, than her evident confusion afforded a happy omen to my flame. At sight of me she start[l]ed, the roses instantly vanished from her polished cheeks, and returned in a moment with a double glow that overspread her lovely neck, while her enchanting bosom heaved with strong emotion. I hailed these favourable symptoms, and, lying in wait for her looks, did homage with my eyes. She seemed to approve my declaration, by the complacency of her aspect; and I was so transported with her discovery, that more than once I

was on the point of making up to her to disclose the throbbings of my heart in person, had not that profound veneration which her presence always inspired, restrained the unseasonable impulse. All my powers being engrossed in this manner, it may easily be imagined how ill I entertained Miss Snapper, on whom I could not now turn my eyes without making comparisons very little to her advantage. It was not even in my power to return distinct answers to the questions she asked from time to time, so that she could not help observing my absence of mind; and, having a turn for observation, watched my glances, and, tracing them to the divine object, discovered the cause of my disorder. That she might, however, be convinced of the truth of her conjecture, she began to interrogate me with regard to Narcissa, and, notwithstanding all my endeavours to disguise my sentiments, perceived my attachment by my confusion. Upon which she assumed a stateliness of behaviour, and sat silent during the remaining part of the entertainment.

At any other time, her suspicion would have alarmed me; but now I was elevated by my passion above every other consideration. The mistress of my soul having retired with her brother, I discovered so much uneasiness at my situation, that Miss Snapper proposed to go home, and while I conducted her to a chair, told me she had too great a regard for me to keep me any longer in torment. I feigned ignorance of her meaning, and having seen her safely at her lodgings, took my leave, and went home in an ecstasy, where I disclosed everything that had happened to

my confidant and humble servant Strap, who did not relish the accident so well as I expected, and observed that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. "But, however," said he, "you know best,—you know best." Next day, as I went to the Pump Room, in hopes of seeing or hearing some tidings of my fair enslaver, I was met by a gentlewoman, who, having looked hard at me, cried, "O C—t! Mr. Random!" Surprised at this exclamation, I examined the countenance of the person who spoke, and immediately recognised my old sweetheart and fellow-sufferer, Miss Williams.

I was mightily pleased to find this unfortunate woman under such a decent appearance, professed my joy at seeing her so well, and desired to know where I should have the pleasure of her conversation. She was as heartily rejoiced at the apparent easiness of my fortune, and gave me to know, that she, as yet, had no habitation that she could properly call her own, but would wait on me at any place I should please to appoint. Understanding that she was unengaged for the present, I showed her the way to my own lodgings, where, after a very affectionate salutation, she informed me of her being very happy in the service of a young lady to whom she was recommended by a former mistress deceased, into whose family she had recommended herself by the honest deceit she had concerted while she lived with me in the garret at London. She then expressed a vehement desire to be acquainted with the vicissitudes of my life since we parted, and excused her curiosity on account of the concern she had for my interest. I forthwith grati-

fied her request, and when I described my situation in Sussex, perceived her to attend to my story with particular eagerness. She interrupted me when I had finished that period with, "Good God! is it possible?" — and then begged I would be so good as to continue my relation; which I did as briefly as I could, burning with impatience to know the cause of her surprise, about which I had already formed a very interesting conjecture.

When I had brought my adventures down to the present day, she seemed very much affected with the different circumstances of my fortune; and saying with a smile, she believed my distresses were now at a period, proceeded to inform me, that the lady whom she served, was no other than the charming Narcissa, who had honoured her with her confidence for some time; in consequence of which trust, she had often repeated the story of John Brown, with great admiration and regard; that she loved to dwell upon the particulars of his character, and did not scruple to own a tender approbation of his flame. I became delirious at this piece of intelligence, strained Miss Williams in my embrace, called her the angel of my happiness, and acted such extravagances, that she might have been convinced of my sincerity, had she not been satisfied of my honour before. As soon as I was in condition to yield attention, she described the present situation of her mistress, who had no sooner reached her lodgings the night before, than she closeted her, and, in a rapture of joy, gave her to know that she had seen me at the ball, where I appeared in the character which she always thought

my due, with such advantage of transformation, that unless my image had been engraven on her heart, it would have been impossible to know me for the person who had worn her aunt's livery; that, by the language of my eyes, she was assured of the continuance of my passion for her, and consequently of my being unengaged to any other; and that, though she did not doubt I would speedily fall upon some method of being introduced, she was so impatient to hear of me, that she (Miss Williams) had been sent abroad this very morning, on purpose to learn the name and character I at present bore.

My bosom had been hitherto a stranger to such a flood of joy as now rushed upon it. My faculties were overborne by the tide. It was some time before I could open my mouth, and much longer ere I could utter a coherent sentence. At length, I fervently requested her to lead me immediately to the object of my adoration. But she resisted my importunity, and explained the danger of such premature conduct. "How favourable soever," said she, "my lady's inclination towards you may be, you may depend upon it, she will not commit the smallest trespass on decorum, either in disclosing her own, or in receiving a declaration of your passion; and although the great veneration I have for you has prompted me to reveal what she communicated to me in confidence, I know so well the severity of her sentiments with respect to the punctilios of her sex, that, if she could learn the least surmise of it, she would not only dismiss me as a wretch unworthy of her benevolence, but also for ever shun the efforts of

your love." I assented to the justness of her remonstrance, and desired she would assist me with her advice and direction. Upon which, it was concerted between us, that, for the present, I should be contented with her telling Narcissa, that, in the course of her inquiries, she could only learn my name; and that if, in a day or two, I could fall upon no other method of being introduced to her mistress, she would deliver a letter from me on pretence of consulting her happiness; and say that I met her in the streets, and bribed her to this piece of service. Matters being thus adjusted, I kept my old acquaintance to breakfast, and learned, from her conversation, that my rival Sir Timothy had drunk himself into an apoplexy, of which he died five months ago; that the savage was still unmarried; and that his aunt had been seized with a whim which he little expected, and chosen the schoolmaster of the parish for her lord and husband; but matrimony not agreeing with her constitution, she had been hectic and dropsical a good while, and was now at Bath, in order to drink the waters for the recovery of her health; that her niece had accompanied her thither at her request, and attended her with the same affection as before, notwithstanding the mistake she had committed; and that her nephew, who had been exasperated at the loss of her fortune, did not give his attendance out of goodwill, but purely to have an eye on his sister, lest she should likewise throw herself away, without his consent or approbation. Having enjoyed ourselves in this manner, and made an assignation to meet next day at a certain place, Miss

STRAP IS ASTONISHED

Williams took her leave; and Strap's looks being very inquisitive about the nature of the communication subsisting between us, I made him acquainted with the whole affair, to his great astonishment and satisfaction.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

I BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH NARCISSA'S BROTHER, WHO INVITES ME TO HIS HOUSE, WHERE I AM INTRODUCED TO THAT ADORABLE CREATURE — AFTER DINNER, THE SQUIRE RETIRES TO TAKE HIS NAP — FREEMAN, GUESSING THE SITUATION OF MY THOUGHTS, WITHDRAWS LIKEWISE ON PRETENCE OF BUSINESS — I DECLARE MY PASSION TO NARCISSA — AM WELL RECEIVED — CHARMED WITH HER CONVERSATION — THE SQUIRE DETAINS US TO SUPPER — I ELUDE HIS DESIGN BY A STRATAGEM, AND GET HOME SOBER.

IN the afternoon I drank tea at the house of Mr. Freeman, to whom I had been recommended by Banter; where I had not sat five minutes till the fox-hunter came in, and by his familiar behaviour appeared to be intimate with my friend. I was at first under some concern, lest he should recollect my features; but when I found myself introduced to him as a gentleman from London, without being discovered, I blessed the opportunity that brought me into his company, hoping that, in the course of our acquaintance, he would invite me to his house. Nor were my hopes frustrated; for, as we spent the evening together, he grew extremely fond of my conversation, asked a

great many childish questions about France and foreign parts; and seemed so highly entertained with my answers, that, in his cups, he shook me often by the hand, pronounced me an honest fellow, and, in fine, desired our company at dinner next day in his own house.

My imagination was so much employed in anticipating the happiness I was to enjoy next day, that I slept very little that night; but, rising early in the morning, went to the place appointed, where I met my she-friend, and imparted to her my success with the squire. She was very much pleased at the occasion, which, she said, could not fail of being agreeable to Narcissa, who, in spite of her passion for me, had mentioned some scruples relating to my true situation and character, which the delicacy of her sentiments suggested, and which she believed I would find it necessary to remove, though she did not know how. I was a good deal startled at this insinuation, because I foresaw the difficulty I should find in barely doing myself justice; for, although it never was my intention to impose myself upon any woman, much less on Narcissa, as a man of fortune, I laid claim to the character of a gentleman, by birth, education, and behaviour; and yet, so unlucky had the circumstances of my life fallen out, I should find it a very hard matter to make good my pretensions even to these, especially to the last, which was the most essential. Miss Williams was as sensible as I of this my disadvantage, but comforted me with observing, that when once a woman had bestowed her affections on

a man, she cannot help judging of him in all respects with a partiality easily influenced in his favour. She remarked, that although some situations of my life had been low, yet none of them had been infamous; that my indigence had been the crime not of me, but of fortune; and that the miseries I had undergone, by improving the faculties both of mind and body, qualified me the more for my dignified station, and would of consequence recommend me to the good graces of any sensible woman. She, therefore, advised me to be always open and unreserved to the inquiries of my mistress, without unnecessarily betraying the meanest occurrences of my fate, and trust to the strength of her love and reflection for the rest. The sentiments of this sensible young woman, on this as well as on almost every other subject, perfectly agreed with mine; I thanked her for the care she took of my interests, and promising to behave myself according to her direction, we parted, after she had assured me that I might depend upon her best offices with her mistress, and that she would from time to time communicate to me such intelligence as she should procure relating to my flame.

Having dressed myself to the best advantage, I waited for the time of dinner with the most fearful impatience; and, as the hour drew nigh, my heart beat with such increased velocity, and my spirits contracted such disorder, that I began to suspect my resolution, and even to wish myself disengaged. At last Mr. Freeman called at my lodgings, in his way, and I accompanied him to the house where all

my happiness was deposited. We were very kindly received by the squire, who sat smoking his pipe in a parlour, and asked if we chose to drink anything before dinner. Though I never had more occasion for a cordial, I was ashamed to accept his offer, which was also refused by my friend. We sat down, however, and entered into conversation, which lasted half an hour, so that I had time to recollect myself; and, so capricious were my thoughts, even to hope that Narcissa would not appear — when all of a sudden, a servant coming in, gave us notice that dinner was upon the table — and my perturbation returned with such violence, that I could scarce conceal it from the company as I ascended the staircase. When I entered the dining-room, the first object that saluted my ravished eyes was the divine Narcissa, blushing like Aurora, adorned with all the graces that meekness, innocence, and beauty can diffuse! I was seized with a giddiness, my knees tottered, and I scarce had strength enough to perform the ceremony of salutation, when her brother, slapping me on the shoulder, cried, "Measter Randan, that there is my sister." I approached her with eagerness and fear; but in the moment of our embrace, my soul was agonised with rapture!

It was a lucky circumstance for us both, that my entertainer was not endued with an uncommon stock of penetration; for our mutual confusion was so manifest, that Mr. Freeman perceived it, and as we went home together, congratulated me on my good fortune. But so far was Bruin from entertaining the least suspicion, that he encouraged me to begin

a conversation with my mistress in a language unknown to him, by telling her, that he had brought a gentleman who could jabber with her in French and other foreign lingos, as fast as she pleased; then turning to me, said, "Odds bobs! I wish you would hold discourse with her in your French or Italiano, and tell me if she understands it as well as she would be thought to do — there's her aunt and she will chatter together whole days in it, and I can't have a mouthful of English for love or money." I consulted the look of my amiable mistress, and found her averse to his proposal, which she declined with a sweetness of denial peculiar to herself, as a piece of disrespect to that part of the company which did not understand the language in question. As I had the happiness of sitting opposite to her, I feasted my eyes much more than my palate, which she tempted in vain with the most delicious bits carved by her fair hand, and recommended by her persuasive tongue; but all my other appetites were swallowed up in the immensity of my love, which I fed by gazing incessantly on the delightful object. Dinner was scarce ended, when the squire became very drowsy, and, after several dreadful yawns, got up, stretched himself, took two or three turns across the room, begged we would allow him to take a short nap, and having laid a strong injunction on his sister to detain us till his return, went to his repose without further ceremony.

He had not been gone many minutes, when Freeman, guessing the situation of my heart, and thinking he could not do me a greater favour than to leave me

alone with Narcissa, pretended to recollect himself all of a sudden, and, starting up, begged the lady's pardon for half an hour, for he had luckily remembered an engagement of some consequence, that he must perform at that instant; so saying, he took his leave, promising to come back time enough for tea, leaving my mistress and me in great confusion. Now that I enjoyed an opportunity of disclosing the pantings of my soul, I had not power to use it. I studied many pathetic declarations, but when I attempted to give them utterance, my tongue denied its office; and she sat silent, with a downcast look, full of anxious alarm, her bosom heaving with expectation of some great event. At length I endeavoured to put an end to this solemn pause, and began with, "It is very surprising, madam," — Here the sound dying away, I made a full stop — while Narcissa starting, blushed, and, with a timid accent, answered, "Sir?" Confounded at this note of interrogation, I pronounced, with the most sheepish bashfulness, "Madam!" To which she replied, "I beg pardon — I thought you had spoke to me." Another pause ensued — I made another effort; and though my voice faltered very much at the beginning, made shift to express myself in this manner: "I say, madam, 't is very surprising that love should act so inconsistent with itself, as to deprive its votaries of the use of their faculties when they have most need of them. Since the happy occasion of being alone with you presented itself, I have made many unsuccessful attempts to declare a passion for the loveliest of your sex — a passion which took possession of my soul, while my cruel fate com-

pelled me to wear a servile disguise so unsuitable to my birth, sentiments, and, let me add, my deserts; yet favourable in one respect, as it furnished me with opportunities of seeing and adoring your perfections. Yes, madam, it was then your dear idea entered my bosom, where it has lived unimpaired in the midst of numberless cares, and animated me against a thousand dangers and calamities."

While I spoke thus, she concealed her face with her fan, and, when I ceased speaking, recovering herself from the most beautiful confusion, told me, she thought herself very much obliged by my favourable opinion of her, and that she was very sorry to hear I had been unfortunate. Encouraged by this gentle reply, I proceeded, owned myself sufficiently recompensed by her kind compassion for what I had undergone, and declared that the future happiness of my life depended solely upon her. "Sir," said she, "I should be very ungrateful, if, after the signal protection you once afforded me, I should refuse to contribute towards your happiness, in any reasonable condescension." Transported at this acknowledgment, I threw myself at her feet, and begged she would regard my passion with a favourable eye. She was alarmed at my behaviour, entreated me to rise, lest her brother should discover me in that posture, and to spare her, for the present, upon a subject for which she was altogether unprepared. In consequence of this remonstrance, I rose, assuring her I would rather die than disobey her; but in the meantime begged her to consider how precious the minutes of this opportunity were, and what restraint I put upon

my inclinations in sacrificing them to her desire. She smiled with unspeakable sweetness, and said there would be no want of opportunities, provided I could maintain the good opinion her brother had conceived of me; and I, enchanted by her charms, seized her hand, which I well-nigh devoured with kisses. But she checked my boldness with a severity of countenance, and desired I would not so far forget myself to her as to endanger the esteem she had for me; she reminded me of our being almost strangers to each other, and of the necessity there was for her knowing me better before she could take any resolution in my favour; and, in short, mingled so much good sense and complacency in her reproof, that I became as much enamoured of her understanding, as I had been before of her beauty, and asked pardon for my presumption with the utmost reverence of conviction. She forgave my offence with her usual affability; and sealed my pardon with a look so full of bewitching tenderness, that for some minutes my senses were lost in ecstasy! I afterwards endeavoured to regulate my behaviour according to her desire, and turn the conversation upon a more indifferent subject. But her presence was an insurmountable obstacle to my design; while I beheld so much excellence, I found it impossible to call my attention from the contemplation of it! I gazed with unutterable fondness! I grew mad with admiration! "My condition is insupportable!" cried I, "I am distracted with passion! why are you so exquisitely fair? Why are you so enchantingly good? Why has Nature dignified you with charms so much above the standard of women?

and, wretch that I am, how dares my unworthiness aspire to the enjoyment of such perfection?"

She was startled at my ravings, reasoned down my transport, and by her irresistible eloquence soothed my soul into a state of tranquil felicity; but, lest I might suffer a relapse, industriously promoted other subjects to entertain my imagination. She chid me for having omitted to inquire about her aunt, who, she assured me, in the midst of all her absence of temper, and detachment from common affairs, often talked of me with uncommon warmth. I professed my veneration for the good lady, excused my omission, by imputing it to the violence of my love, which engrossed my whole soul, and desired to know the situation of her health. Upon which the amiable Narcissa repeated what I had heard before, of her marriage, with all the tenderness for her reputation that the subject would admit of; told me she lived with her husband hard by, and was so much afflicted with the dropsy, and wasted by a consumption, that she had small hopes of her recovery. Having expressed my sorrow for her distemper, I questioned her about my good friend Mrs. Sagely, who I learned, to my great satisfaction, was still in good health, and who had, by the encomiums she bestowed upon me after I was gone, confirmed the favourable impressions my behaviour at parting had made on Narcissa's heart. The circumstance introduced an inquiry into the conduct of Sir Timothy Thicket, who, she informed me, had found means to incense her brother so much against me, that she found it impossible to undeceive him; but, on the contrary, suffered very

much in her own character by his scandalous insinuations; that the whole parish was alarmed, and actually in pursuit of me, so that she had been in the utmost consternation upon my account, well knowing how little my own innocence, and her testimony, would have weighed with the ignorance, prejudice, and brutality of those who must have judged me, had I been apprehended. That Sir Timothy, having been seized with a fit of apoplexy, from which, with great difficulty, he was recovered, began to be apprehensive of death, and to prepare himself accordingly for that great event; as a step to which he sent for her brother, owned, with great contrition, the brutal design he had upon her, and, of consequence, acquitted me of the assault, robbery, and correspondence with her, which he laid to my charge; after which confession, he lived about a month in a languishing condition, and was carried off by a second assault.

Every word that this dear creature spoke, riveted the chains with which she held me enslaved. My mischievous fancy began to work, and the tempest of my passion to wake again, when the return of Freeman destroyed the tempting opportunity, and enabled me to quell the rising tumult. A little while after, the squire staggered into the room, rubbing his eyes, and called for his tea, which he drank out of a small bowl, qualified with brandy, while we took it in the usual way. Narcissa left us in order to visit her aunt; and when Freeman and I proposed to take our leave, the fox-hunter insisted on our spending the evening at his house with such obstinacy of affection,

that we were obliged to comply. For my own part, I should have been glad of the invitation, by which, in all likelihood, I should be blessed with more of his sister's company, had I not been afraid of risking her esteem, by entering into a debauch of drinking with him, which, from the knowledge of his character, I foresaw would happen; but there was no remedy. I was forced to rely upon the strength of my constitution, which I hoped would resist intoxication longer than the squire's, and to trust to the good-nature and discretion of my mistress for the rest.

Our entertainer, resolving to begin by times, ordered the table to be furnished with liquor and glasses immediately after tea; but we absolutely refused to set in for drinking so soon, and prevailed upon him to pass away an hour or two at whist, in which we engaged as soon as Narcissa returned. The savage and I happened to be partners at first; and as my thoughts were wholly employed in a more interesting game, I played so ill, that he lost all patience, swore bitterly, and threatened to call for wine if they would not grant him another associate. This desire was gratified, and Narcissa and I were of a side; he won, for the same reason that made him lose before. I was satisfied, my lovely partner did not repine, and the time slipped away very agreeably, until we were told that supper was served in another room.

The squire was enraged to find the evening so unprofitably spent, and wreaked his vengeance on the cards, which he tore, and committed to the flames with many execrations, threatening to make us

redeem our loss with a large glass, and quick circulation ; and, indeed, we had no sooner supped, and my charmer withdrawn, than he began to put his threats in execution. Three bottles of port (for he drank no other sort of wine) were placed before us, with as many water-glasses, which were immediately filled to the brim, after his example, by each, out of his respective allowance, and emptied in a trice, *to the best in Christendom.* Though I swallowed this and the next as fast as the glass could be replenished, without hesitation or show of reluctance, I perceived that my brain would not be able to bear many bumpers of this sort; and, dreading the perseverance of a champion who began with such vigour, I determined to make up for the deficiency of my strength by a stratagem, which I actually put in practice when the second course of bottles was called for. The wine being strong and heady, I was already a good deal discomposed by the dispatch we had made, Freeman's eyes began to reel, and Bruin himself was elevated into a song, which he uttered with great vociferation.

When I, therefore, saw the second round brought in, I assumed a gay air, entertained him with a French catch on the subject of drinking, which, though he did not understand it, delighted him highly, and, telling him that your choice spirits at Paris never troubled themselves with glasses, asked if he had not a bowl or cup in the house that would contain a whole quart of wine. "Odds niggers!" cried he, "I have a silver caudle cup that holds just the quantity, for all the world — fetch it hither, Numps."

The vessel being produced, I bade him decant his bottle into it, which he having done, I nodded in a very deliberate manner, and said, "Pledge you." He stared at me for some time, and crying, "What! all at one pull, Measter Randan?" I answered, "At one pull, sir; you are no milk-sop — we shall do you justice." "Shall you?" said he, shaking me by the hand; "odds then, I 'll see it out, an 't were a mile to the bottom. Here 's to our better acquaintance, Measter Randan;" so saying, he applied it to his lips, and emptied it in a breath. I knew the effect of it would be almost instantaneous; therefore, taking the cup, began to discharge my bottle into it, telling him he was now qualified to drink with the Cham of Tartary. I had no sooner pronounced these words, than he took umbrage at them, and, after several attempts to spit, made shift to stutter out, "A f—t for your Chams of T— Tartary! — a am a f—f—free-born Englishman, worth th—three thousand a year, and v—value no man, d—me!" Then, dropping his jaw, and fixing his eyes, he hiccupped aloud, and fell upon the floor as mute as a flounder. Mr. Freeman, heartily glad at his defeat, assisted me in carrying him to bed, where we left him to the care of his servants, and went home to our respective habitations, congratulating each other on our good fortune.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

MISS WILLIAMS INFORMS ME OF NARCISSA'S APPROBATION OF MY FLAME — I APPEASE THE SQUIRE — WRITE TO MY MISTRESS, AM BLESSED WITH AN ANSWER — BEG LEAVE OF HER BROTHER TO DANCE WITH HER AT A BALL; OBTAIN HIS CONSENT AND HERS — ENJOY A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH HER — AM PERPLEXED WITH REFLECTIONS — HAVE THE HONOUR OF APPEARING HER PARTNER AT A BALL — WE ARE COMPLIMENTED BY A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN — HE DISCOVERS SOME SYMPTOMS OF A PASSION FOR NARCISSA — I AM STUNG WITH JEALOUSY — NARCISSA ALARMED, RETIRES — I OBSERVE MELINDA IN THE COMPANY — THE SQUIRE IS CAPTIVATED BY HER BEAUTY.

I WAS met next morning, at the usual place, by Miss Williams, who gave me joy of the progress I had made in the affection of her mistress, and blessed me with an account of that dear creature's conversation with her, after she had retired the night before from our company. I could scarce believe her information, when she recounted her expressions in my favour, so much more warm and passionate were they than my most sanguine hopes had presaged; and was particularly pleased to hear that she approved of my behaviour to her brother after she withdrew. Transported at the news of my happiness, I presented my ring to the

messenger, as a testimony of my gratitude and satisfaction; but she was above such mercenary considerations, and refused my compliment with some resentment, saying she was not a little mortified to see my opinion of her so low and contemptible. I did myself a piece of justice by explaining my behaviour on this head, and, to convince her of my esteem, promised to be ruled by her directions in the prosecution of the whole affair, which I had so much at heart, that the repose of my life depended upon the consequence.

As I fervently wished for another interview, where I might pour out the effusions of my love without danger of being interrupted, and perhaps reap some endearing return from the queen of my desires, I implored her advice and assistance in promoting this event. But she gave me to understand, that Narcissa would make no precipitate compliances of this kind, and that I would do well to cultivate her brother's acquaintance, in the course of which I should not want opportunities of removing that reserve which my mistress thought herself obliged to maintain during the infancy of our correspondence. In the meantime she promised to tell her lady, that I had endeavoured, by presents and persuasions, to prevail upon her (Miss Williams) to deliver a letter from me, which she had refused to charge herself with, until she would know Narcissa's sentiments of the matter; and said, by these means she did not doubt of being able to open a literary communication between us, which could not fail of introducing more intimate connexions.

I approved of her counsel, and, our appointment being renewed for next day, left her with an intent of falling upon some method of being reconciled to the squire, who, I supposed, would be offended with the trick we had put upon him. With this view, I consulted Freeman, who, from his knowledge of the fox-hunter's disposition, assured me there was no other method of pacifying him, than that of sacrificing ourselves, for one night, to an equal match with him in drinking. This expedient, I found myself necessitated to comply with, for the interest of my passion, and therefore determined to commit the debauch at my own lodgings, that I might run no risk of being discovered by Narcissa in a state of brutal degeneracy. Mr. Freeman, who was to be of the party, went at my desire to the squire, in order to engage him, while I took care to furnish myself for his reception. My invitation was accepted, my guests honoured me with their company in the evening, when Bruin gave me to understand that he had drunk many tuns of wine in his life, but was never served such a trick as I had played upon him the night before. I promised to atone for my trespass, and, having ordered to every man his bottle, began the contest with a bumper to the health of Narcissa. The toasts circulated with great devotion, the liquor began to operate, our mirth grew noisy, and as Freeman and I had the advantage of drinking small French claret, the savage was effectually tamed before our senses were in the least affected, and carried home in an apoplexy of drunkenness.

I was next morning, as usual, favoured with a visit

from my kind and punctual confidant, who telling me she was permitted to receive my letters for her mistress, I took up the pen immediately, and following the first dictates of my passion, wrote as follows: —

"DEAR MADAM, — Were it possible for the powers of utterance to reveal the soft emotions of my soul; the fond anxiety, the glowing hopes, the chilling fears, that rule my breast by turns; I should need no other witness than this paper to evince the purity and ardour of that flame your charms have kindled in my heart. But, alas! expression wrongs my love! I am inspired with conceptions that no language can convey! Your beauty fills me with wonder! your understanding with ravishment, and your goodness with adoration! I am transported with desire, distracted with doubts, and tortured with impatience! Suffer me then, lovely arbitress of my fate, to approach you in person, to breathe in soft murmurs my passion to your ear, to offer the sacrifice of a heart overflowing with the most genuine and disinterested love; to gaze with ecstasy on the divine object of my wishes, to hear the music of her enchanting tongue; and to rejoice in her smiles of approbation, which will banish the most intolerable suspense from the bosom of

"Your enraptured R—— R——."

Having finished this effusion, I committed it to the care of my faithful friend, with an injunction to second my entreaty with all her eloquence and influence; and in the meantime went to dress, with an intention of visiting Mrs. Snapper and Miss, whom I had utterly neglected, and indeed almost forgot, since my dear Narcissa had resumed the empire of my soul. The old gentlewoman received me very kindly, and

Miss affected a frankness and gaiety, which, however, I could easily perceive were forced and dissembled; among other things, she pretended to joke me upon my passion for Narcissa, which she averred was no secret, and asked if I intended to dance with her at the next assembly. I was a good deal concerned to find myself become the town-talk on this subject, lest the squire, having notice of my inclinations, should disapprove of them, and, by breaking off all correspondence with me, deprive me of the opportunities I now enjoyed. But I resolved to use the interest I had with him, while it lasted; and that very night meeting him occasionally, asked his permission to solicit her company at the ball, which he very readily granted, to my inexpressible satisfaction.

Having been kept awake the greatest part of the night by a thousand delightful reveries that took possession of my fancy, I got up by times, and, flying to the place of rendezvous, had in a little time the pleasure of seeing Miss Williams approach with a smile on her countenance, which I interpreted into a good omen. Neither was I mistaken in my presage. She presented me with a letter from the idol of my soul, which, after having kissed it devoutly, I opened with the utmost eagerness, and was blessed with her approbation in these terms: —

"Sir, — To say I look upon you with indifference, would be a piece of dissimulation, which I think no decorum requires, and no custom can justify. As my heart never felt an impression that my tongue was ashamed to declare, I will not scruple to own myself

pleased with your passion, confident of your integrity, and so well convinced of my own discretion, that I should not hesitate in granting you the interview you desire, were I not overawed by the prying curiosity of a malicious world, the censure of which might be fatally prejudicial to the reputation of

"Your NARCISSA."

No anchorite in the ecstasy of devotion ever adored a relique with more fervour than that with which I kissed this inimitable proof of my charmer's candour, generosity, and affection! I read it over an hundred times; was ravished with her confession in the beginning; but the subscription of *Your Narcissa*, yielded me such delight as I had never felt before. My happiness was still increased by Miss Williams, who blessed me with a repetition of her lady's tender expressions in my favour, when she received and read my letter. In short, I had all the reason in the world to believe that this gentle creature's bosom was possessed by a passion for me, as warm, though perhaps not so impetuous, as mine for her.

I informed my friend of the squire's consent to my dancing with Narcissa at the ball, and desired her to tell her mistress, that I would do myself the honour of visiting her in the afternoon, in consequence of his permission, when I hoped to find her as indulgent as her brother had been complaisant in that particular. Miss Williams expressed a good deal of joy, at hearing I was so much in favour with the fox-hunter, and ventured to assure me, that my visit would be very agreeable to my mistress, the

rather, because Bruin was engaged to dine abroad. This was a circumstance which, I scarce need say, pleased me. I went immediately to the Long Room, where I found him, and affecting to know nothing of the engagement, told him, I would do myself the pleasure to wait upon him in the afternoon, and to present his sister with a ticket for the ball. He shook me by the hand, according to custom, and giving me to understand that he was to dine abroad, desired me to go and drink tea with Narcissa notwithstanding, and promised to prepare her for my visit in the meantime.

Everything succeeding thus to my wish, I waited with incredible impatience for the time, which no sooner arrived, than I hastened to the scene, which my fancy had preoccupied long before. I was introduced accordingly to the dear enchantress, whom I found accompanied by Miss Williams, who, on pretence of ordering tea, retired at my approach. This favourable accident, which alarmed my whole soul, disordered her also. I found myself actuated by an irresistible impulse; I advanced to her with eagerness and awe, and, profiting by the confusion that prevailed over her, clasped the fair angel in my arms, and imprinted a glowing kiss upon her lips, more soft and fragrant than the dewy rosebud just bursting from the stem! Her face was in an instant covered with blushes — her eyes sparkled with resentment — I threw myself at her feet, and implored her pardon. Her love became advocate in my cause; her look softened into forgiveness; she raised me up, and chid me with so much sweetness of displeasure,

that I should have been tempted to repeat the offence, had not the coming in of a servant with the tea-board prevented my presumption. While we were subject to be interrupted or overheard, we conversed about the approaching ball, at which she promised to grace me as a partner; but when the equipage was removed, and we were left alone, I resumed the more interesting theme, and expressed myself with such transport and agitation, that my mistress, fearing I would commit some extravagance, rung the bell for her maid, whom she detained in the room, as a check upon my vivacity. I was not sorry for this precaution, because I could unbosom myself without reserve before Miss Williams, who was the confidant of us both. I therefore gave a loose to the inspirations of my passion, which operated so successfully upon the tender affections of Narcissa, that she laid aside the constraint she had hitherto wore, and blessed me with the most melting declaration of her mutual flame! It was impossible for me to forbear taking the advantage of this endearing condescension. She now gently yielded to my embraces; while I, encircling all that I held dear within my arms, tasted in advance the joys of that paradise I hoped in a little time wholly to possess! We spent the afternoon in all the ecstasy of hope, that the most fervent love, exchanged by mutual vows, could inspire; and Miss Williams was so much affected with our chaste caresses, which recalled the sad remembrance of what she was, that her eyes were filled with tears.

The evening being pretty far advanced, I forced

myself from the dear object of my flame, who indulged me in a tender embrace at parting; and, repairing to my lodgings, communicated to my friend Strap every circumstance of my happiness, which filled him with so much pleasure, that it ran over at his eyes; and he prayed heartily, that no envious devil might, as formerly, dash the cup of blessing from my lip. When I reflected on what had happened, and especially on the unreserved protestations of Narcissa's love, I could not help being amazed at her omitting to inquire into the particular circumstances of the life and fortune of one whom she had favoured with her affection, and I began to be a little anxious about the situation of her finances, well knowing that I should do an irreparable injury to the person my soul held most dear, if I should espouse her, without being able to support her in the rank which was certainly her due. I had heard indeed, while I served her aunt, that her father had left her a considerable sum; and that everybody believed she would inherit the greatest part of her kinswoman's dowry; but I did not know how far she might be restricted by the old gentleman's will, in the enjoyment of what he left her; and I was too well informed of the virtuoso's late conduct, to think my mistress could have any expectations from that quarter. I confided, however, in the good sense and policy of my charmer, who, I was sure, would not consent to unite her fate with mine, before she had fully considered and provided for the consequence.

The ball-night being arrived, I dressed myself in

a suit I had reserved for some grand occasion; and having drank tea with Narcissa and her brother, conducted my angel to the scene, where she in a moment eclipsed all her female competitors for beauty, and attracted the admiration of the whole assembly. My heart dilated with pride on this occasion, and my triumph rejected all bounds, when, after we had danced together, a certain nobleman, remarkable for his figure and influence in the *beau monde*, came up, and in the hearing of all present, honoured us with a very particular compliment, upon our accomplishments and appearance. But this transport was soon checked when I perceived his lordship attach himself with great assiduity to my mistress, and say some warm things, which, I thought, savoured too much of passion. It was then I began to feel the pangs of jealousy — I dreaded the power and address of my rival — I sickened at his discourse; when she opened her lips to answer, my heart died within me. When she smiled, I felt the pains of the d—d! I was enraged at his presumption; I cursed her complaisance; at length he quitted her, and went to the other side of the room. Narcissa suspecting nothing of the rage that inflamed me, put some questions to me, as soon as he was gone, to which I made no reply, but assumed a grim look, which too well denoted the agitation of my breast, and surprised her not a little. She no sooner observed my emotion, than she changed colour, and asked what ailed me? but, before I could make answer, her brother, pulling me by the sleeve, bade me take notice of a lady who sat

fronting us, whom I immediately, to my vast astonishment, distinguished to be Melinda, accompanied by her mother, and an elderly gentleman, whom I did not know. "Wounds! Mr. Randan," cried the squire, "is she not a delicate piece of stuff? 'Sdeath! I have a good mind — if I thought she was a single person" —

Notwithstanding the perplexity I was in, I had reflection enough to foresee that my passion might suffer greatly by the presence of this lady, who in all probability would revenge herself upon me for having formerly disgraced her, by spreading reports to my prejudice. I was therefore alarmed at these symptoms of the squire's admiration; and for some time did not know what reply to make, when he asked my opinion of her beauty. At length I came to a determination, and told him that her name was Melinda, that she had a fortune of ten thousand pounds, and was said to be under promise of marriage to a certain lord, who deferred his nuptials a few months, until he should be of age. I thought this piece of intelligence, which I had myself invented, would have hindered him effectually from entertaining any farther thoughts of her; but I was egregiously mistaken. The fox-hunter had too much self-sufficiency, to despair of success against any competitor on earth. He therefore made light of her engagement, saying, with a smile of self-approbation, "Mayhap she will change her mind — what signifies his being a lord? I think myself as good a man as e'er a lord in Christendom; — and I'll see if a commoner worth three thousand a year won't serve her

turn." This determination startled me not a little. I knew he would soon discover the contrary of what I advanced; and, as I believed he would find her ear open to his addresses, did not doubt of meeting with every obstacle in my amour that her malice could invent, and her influence execute. This reflection increased my chagrin. My vexation was evident. Narcissa insisted on going home immediately; and, as I led her to the door, her noble admirer, with a look full of languishment, directed to her a profound bow, which stung me to the soul. Before she went into the chair, she asked, with an appearance of concern, what was the matter with me? and I could pronounce no more than, "By heaven! I'm distracted."

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

TORTURED WITH JEALOUSY, I GO HOME AND ABUSE STRAP — RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM NARCISSA, IN CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH I HASTEN TO HER APARTMENT, WHERE HER ENDEARING ASSURANCES BANISH ALL MY DOUBTS AND APPREHENSIONS — IN MY RETREAT DISCOVER SOMEBODY IN THE DARK, WHOM, SUSPECTING TO BE A SPY, I RESOLVE TO KILL; BUT, TO MY GREAT SURPRISE, AM CONVINCED OF HIS BEING NO OTHER THAN STRAP — MELINDA SLANDERS ME — I BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH LORD QUIVERWIT, WHO ENDEAVOURS TO SOUND ME WITH REGARD TO NARCISSA — THE SQUIRE IS INTRODUCED TO HIS LORDSHIP, AND GROWS COLD TOWARDS ME — I LEARN FROM MY CONFIDANT, THAT THIS NOBLEMAN PROFESSES HONOURABLE LOVE TO MY MISTRESS, WHO CONTINUES FAITHFUL TO ME, NOTWITHSTANDING THE SCANDALOUS REPORTS SHE HAS HEARD TO MY PREJUDICE — I AM MORTIFIED WITH AN ASSURANCE THAT HER WHOLE FORTUNE DEPENDS UPON THE PLEASURE OF HER BROTHER — MR. FREEMAN CONDOLES ME ON THE DECLINE OF MY CHARACTER, WHICH I VINDICATE SO MUCH TO HIS SATISFACTION, THAT HE UNDERTAKES TO COMBAT FAME IN MY BEHALF.

HAVING uttered this exclamation, at which she sighed, I went home in the condition of a frantic bedlamite; and finding the fire in my apartment almost extinguished, vented my fury upon poor Strap, whose ear I pinched with such violence, that he roared hid-

eously with pain, and, when I quitted my hold, looked so foolishly aghast, that no unconcerned spectator could have seen him, without being seized with an immoderate fit of laughter. It is true, I was soon sensible of the injury I had done, and asked pardon for the outrage I had committed; upon which my faithful valet, shaking his head, said, "I forgive you, and may God forgive you." But he could not help shedding some tears at my unkindness. I felt unspeakable remorse for what I had done, cursed my own ingratitude, and considered his tears as a reproach that my soul, in her present disturbance, could not bear. It set all my passions into a ferment, I swore horrible oaths without meaning or application, I foamed at the mouth, kicked the chairs about the room, and played abundance of mad pranks, that frightened my friend almost out of his senses. At length my transport subsided, I became melancholy, and wept insensibly.

During this state of dejection, I was surprised with the appearance of Miss Williams, whom Strap, blubbering all the while, had conducted into the chamber, without giving me previous notice of her approach. She was extremely affected with my condition, which she had learned from him, begged me to moderate my passion, suspend my conjectures, and follow her to Narcissa, who desired to see me forthwith. That dear name operated upon me like a charm! I started up, and without opening my lips, was conducted into her apartment through the garden, which we entered by a private door. I found the adorable creature in tears!—I was melted at the

sight — we continued silent for some time — my heart was too full to speak — her snowy bosom heaved with fond resentment; at last she sobbing cried, "What have I done to disoblige you?" My heart was pierced with the tender question! — I drew near with the utmost reverence of affection! — I fell upon my knees before her, and kissing her hand, exclaimed, "O! thou art all goodness and perfection! — I am undone by want of merit! — I am unworthy to possess thy charms, which heaven hath destined for the arms of some more favoured being." She guessed the cause of my disquiet, upbraided me gently for my suspicion, and gave me such flattering assurances of her eternal fidelity, that all my doubts and fears forsook me, and peace and satisfaction reigned within my breast.

At midnight, I left the fair nymph to her repose, and, being let out by Miss Williams at the garden gate by which I entered, began to explore my way homeward in the dark, when I heard at my back a noise like that of a baboon when he mows and chatters. I turned instantly, and perceiving something black, concluded I was discovered by some spy employed to watch for that purpose. Aroused at this conjecture, by which the reputation of the virtuous Narcissa appeared in jeopardy, I drew my sword, and would have sacrificed him to her fame, had not the voice of Strap restrained my arm. It was with great difficulty he could pronounce, "D—d—do! mum—um—um—murder me, if you please." Such an effect had the cold upon his jaws, that his teeth rattled like a pair of castanets. Pleased to be thus

undeceived, I laughed at his consternation, and asked what brought him thither? Upon which he gave me to understand, that his concern for me had induced him to follow me to that place, where the same reason had detained him till now; and he frankly owned, that, in spite of the esteem he had for Miss Williams, he began to be very uneasy about me, considering the disposition in which I went abroad, and if I had staid much longer, would have certainly alarmed the neighbourhood in my behalf. The knowledge of this his intention confounded me! I represented to him the mischievous consequences that would have attended such a rash action, and cautioning him severely against any such design for the future, concluded my admonition with an assurance, that, in case he should ever act so madly, I would, without hesitation, put him to death. "Have a little patience," cried he, in a lamentable tone; "your displeasure will do the business, without your committing murder." I was touched with this reproach; and, as soon as we got home, made it my business to appease him, by explaining the cause of that transport during which I had used him so unworthily.

Next day, when I went into the Long Room, I observed several whispers circulate all of a sudden, and did not doubt that Melinda had been busy with my character; but I consoled myself with the love of Narcissa, upon which I rested with the most perfect confidence, and going up to the rowly-powly table, won a few pieces from my suspected rival, who, with an easy politeness, entered into conversation with

me, and desiring my company at the coffee-house, treated me with tea and chocolate. I remembered Strutwell, and guarded against his insinuating behaviour; nor was my suspicion wrong placed; he artfully turned the discourse upon Narcissa, and endeavoured, by hinting at an intrigue he pretended to be engaged in elsewhere, to learn what connexion there was between her and me. But all his finesse was ineffectual; I was convinced of his dissimulation, and gave such general answers to his inquiries, that he was forced to drop the subject, and talk of something else.

While we conversed in this manner, the savage came in with another gentleman, who introduced him to his lordship; and he was received with such peculiar marks of distinction, that I was persuaded the courtier intended to use him in some shape or other; and from thence I drew an unlucky omen. But I had more cause to be dismayed the following day, when I saw the squire in company with Melinda and her mother, who honoured me with several disdainful glances; and when I afterwards threw myself in his way, instead of the cordial shake of the hand, he returned my salute with a cold repetition of "Servant, servant;" which he pronounced with such indifference, or rather contempt, that, if he had not been Narcissa's brother, I should have affronted him in public.

These occurrences disturbed me not a little. I foresaw the brooding storm, and armed myself with resolution for the occasion; but Narcissa being at stake, I was far from being resigned. I could have

renounced every other comfort of life with some degree of fortitude; but the prospect of losing her disabled all my philosophy, and tortured my soul into madness.

Miss Williams found me next morning full of anxious tumult, which did not abate, when she told me, that my Lord Quiverwit, having professed honourable intentions, had been introduced to my lovely mistress by her brother, who had, at the same time, from the information of Melinda, spoke of me as an Irish fortune-hunter, without either birth or estate; who supported myself in the appearance of a gentleman by sharping and other infamous practices; and who was of such an obscure origin, that I did not even know my own extraction. Though I expected all this malice, I could not hear it with temper, especially as truth was so blended with falsehood in the assertion, that it would be almost impossible to separate the one from the other in my vindication. But I said nothing on this head, being impatient to know how Narcissa had been affected with the discovery. That generous creature, far from believing these imputations, was no sooner withdrawn with her confidant, than she inveighed with great warmth against the malevolence of the world, to which only she ascribed the whole of what had been said to my disadvantage; and calling every circumstance of my behaviour to her into review before her, found everything so polite, honourable, and disinterested, that she could not harbour the least doubt of my being the gentleman I assumed. "I have indeed," said she, "purposely forbore to ask

the particulars of his life, lest the recapitulation of some misfortunes, which he has undergone, should give him pain : and, as to the article of his fortune, I own myself equally afraid of inquiring into it, and of discovering the situation of my own, lest we should find ourselves both unhappy in the explanation ; for alas! my provision is conditional, and depends entirely on my marrying with my brother's consent."

I was thunderstruck with this intelligence; the light forsook my eyes, the colour vanished from my cheeks, and I remained in a state of universal trepidation! My female friend perceiving my disorder, encouraged me with assurances of Narcissa's constancy, and the hope of some accident favourable to our love ; and, as a further consolation, gave me to understand, that she had acquainted my mistress with the outlines of my life ; and that, although she was no stranger to the present low state of my finances, her love and esteem were rather increased than diminished by the knowledge of my circumstances. I was greatly comforted by this assurance, which saved me a world of confusion and anxiety : for I must have imparted my situation one day to Narcissa ; and this task I could not have performed without shame and disorder.

As I did not doubt that, by this time, the scandalous aspersions of Melinda were diffused all over the town, I resolved to collect my whole strength of assurance, to brow-beat the efforts of her malice, and to publish her adventure with the frenchified barber, by way of reprisal. In the meantime, having promised to be at the garden gate about midnight, Miss Williams took her leave, bidding me repose myself

entirely on the affection of my dear Narcissa, which was as perfect as inviolable. Before I went abroad, I was visited by Freeman, who came on purpose to inform me of the infamous stories that were raised at my expense. I heard them with great temper, and in my turn disclosed everything that had happened between Melinda and me; and, among other circumstances, entertained him with the story of the barber, letting him know what share his friend Banter had in that affair: he was convinced of the injury my reputation had suffered, and no longer doubting the fountain from whence this deluge of slander had flowed upon me, undertook to undeceive the town in my behalf, and roll the stream back upon its source; but, in the meantime, cautioned me from appearing in public while the prepossession was so strong against me, lest I should meet with some affront that might have bad consequences.

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

I RECEIVE AN EXTRAORDINARY MESSAGE AT THE DOOR OF THE LONG ROOM, WHICH I HOWEVER ENTER, AND AFFRONT THE SQUIRE, WHO THREATENS TO TAKE THE LAW OF ME — REBUKE MELINDA FOR HER MALICE — SHE WEEPS WITH VEXATION — LORD QUIVERWIT IS SEVERE UPON ME — I RETORT HIS SARCASM — AM RECEIVED WITH THE UTMOST TENDERNESS BY NARCISSA, WHO DESIRES TO HEAR THE STORY OF MY LIFE — WE VOW ETERNAL CONSTANCY TO ONE ANOTHER — I RETIRE — AM WAKED BY A MESSENGER, WHO BRINGS A CHALLENGE FROM QUIVERWIT, WHOM I MEET, ENGAGE, AND VANQUISH.

I THANKED him for his advice, which, however, my pride and resentment would not permit me to follow; for he no sooner left me, in order to do justice to my character among his friends and acquaintance, than I sallied out, and went directly to the Long Room. I was met at the door by a servant, who presented to me a billet without a subscription, importing that my presence was disagreeable to the company, and desiring I would take the hint without further disturbance, and bestow myself elsewhere for the future. This peremptory message filled me with indignation. I followed the fellow who delivered it, and seizing him by the collar, in presence of all the company,

threatened to put him instantly to death if he did not discover the scoundrel who had charged him with such an impudent commission, that I might punish him as he deserved. The messenger, affrighted at my menaces and furious looks, fell upon his knees, and told me, that the gentleman who ordered him to deliver the letter was no other than Narcissa's brother, who, at that time, stood at the other end of the room, talking to Melinda. I went up to him immediately, and, in the hearing of his inamorata, accosted him in these words, "Look'ee, squire, was it not for one consideration that protects you from my resentment, I would cane you where you stand, for having had the presumption to send me this scurrilous intimation;" which I tore to pieces, and threw in his face: at the same time, darting an angry regard at his mistress, I told her, I was sorry she had put it out of my power to compliment her upon her invention, but at the expense of her good-nature and veracity.

Her admirer, whose courage never rose but in proportion to the wine he had swallowed, instead of resenting my address in what is called an honourable way, threatened to prosecute me for an assault, and took witnesses accordingly; while she, piqued at his pusillanimous behaviour, and enraged at the sarcasm I had uttered against her, endeavoured to make her quarrel a public cause, and wept aloud with spite and vexation. The tears of a lady could not fail of attracting the notice and concern of the spectators, to whom she complained of my rudeness with great bitterness, saying, if she was a man, I durst not use her

so. The greatest part of the gentlemen, already prejudiced against me, were offended at the liberty I had taken, as appeared from their looks; though none of them signified their disgust in any other way, except my Lord Quiverwit, who ventured to say, with a sneer, that I was in the right to establish my own character, of which he had now no longer any doubt. Nettled at this severe equivoque, which raised a laugh at my expense, I replied with some warmth, "I am proud of having in that particular got the start of your lordship." He made no answer to my repartee, but, with a contemptuous smile, walked off, leaving me in a very disagreeable situation. In vain did I make up to several people of my acquaintance, whose conversation, I hoped, would banish my confusion; everybody shunned me like a person infected, and I should not have been able to bear my disgrace, had not the idea of the ever-faithful and fond Narcissa come to my relief. I quitted the scene of my mortification, and, sauntering about the town, happened to wake from my contemplation, when I found myself just opposite to a toy-shop, which I entered, and purchased a ring set with a ruby in the form of a heart, surrounded by diamond sparks, for which I paid ten guineas, intending it for a present to the charmer of my soul.

I was introduced, at the hour appointed, to this divine creature, who, notwithstanding what she had heard to my disadvantage, received me with the utmost confidence and tenderness; and having been informed of the general sketches of my life by Miss Williams, expressed a desire of knowing the particular

circumstances, which I related with great candour, omitting, however, some things, that I concluded altogether improper for her ear, and which the reader's reflection will easily suggest. As my story was little else than a recital of misfortunes, the tear of sympathy ceased not to trickle down her enchanting eyes during the whole of the narration, which when I had finished, she recompensed me for my trouble with the most endearing protestations of eternal love. She bewailed her restricted condition, as it was the means of retarding my happiness; told me that Lord Quiverwit, by her brother's permission, had been to drink tea with her that very afternoon, and actually proposed marriage; and, seeing me extremely affected with this piece of information, offered to give me a convincing proof of her affection, by espousing me in private, and leaving the rest to fate. I was penetrated with this instance of her regard, but that I might not be outdone in generosity, resisted the bewitching temptation, in consideration of her honour and interest; at the same time, I presented my ring as a pledge of my inviolable attachment, and on my knees implored Heaven to shower its curses on my head, if ever my heart should entertain one thought unworthy of the passion I then avowed. She received my token, gave me in return her picture in miniature, exquisitely drawn, and set in gold; and in the same posture called Heaven to witness, and to judge her flame. Our vows being thus reciprocally breathed, a confidence of hope ensued, and our mutual fondness becoming as intimate as innocence would allow, I grew insensible of the progress of time, and

it was morning before I could tear myself from this darling of my soul! — My good angel foresaw what would happen, and permitted me to indulge myself on this occasion, in consideration of the fatal absence I was doomed to suffer.

I went to bed immediately on my return to my lodging, and, having slept about two hours, was waked by Strap, who, in great confusion, told me, there was a footman below with a letter, which he would deliver to nobody but myself. Alarmed at this piece of news, I desired my friend to show him up to my chamber, and received the following letter, which, he said, required an immediate answer: —

"SIR, — When any man injures my honour, let the difference of rank between us be ever so great, I am contented to waive the privilege of my quality, and to seek reparation from him on equal terms. The insolence of your reply to me yesterday in the Long Room I might have overlooked, had not your presumptive emulation in a much more interesting affair, and a discovery which I made this morning, concurred in persuading me to chastise your audacity with my sword. If you, therefore, have spirit enough to support the character you assume, you will not fail to follow the bearer immediately to a convenient place, where you shall be met by "QUIVERWIT."

Whether I was enervated by the love and favour of Narcissa, or awed by the superior station of my antagonist, I know not, but I never had less inclination to fight than at this time. However, finding there was a necessity for vindicating the reputation of my mistress, as well as for asserting my own

honour, I forthwith rose, and, dressing in a hurry, put on my sword, bade Strap attend me, and set out with my conductor, cursing my bad fortune all the way for having been observed in my return from my angel; for so I interpreted his lordship's discovery. When I came within sight of my rival, his lacquey told me he had orders to stop; upon which, I commanded Strap to halt also, while I walked forward, resolving, if possible, to come to an explanation with my challenger before we should come to battle. Nor was an opportunity wanting; for I no sooner approached, than he asked, with a stern countenance, what business I had in Mr. Topehall's garden so early in the morning? "I don't know, my lord," said I, "how to answer a question put to me with such magisterial haughtiness. If your lordship will please to expostulate calmly, you will have no cause to repent of your condescension; otherwise, I am not to be intimidated into any confession." "There is no room for denial," answered he; "I saw you come out with my own eyes." "Did any other person see me?" said I. "I neither know, nor care," said he; "I want no other evidence than that of my own senses." Pleased to hear that the suspicion was confined to him alone, I endeavoured to appease his jealousy, by owning an intrigue with the waiting-maid; but he had too much discernment to be so easily imposed upon, and told me there was only one way to convince him of the truth of what I alleged, which was no other than renouncing all claim to Narcissa upon oath, and promising, upon honour, never to speak to her for the future.

Exasperated at this proposal, I unsheathed my sword, saying, "Heavens! what title have you, or any man on earth, to impose such terms on me!" He did the same, and making towards me with a contracted brow, said, I was a villain, and had dishonoured Narcissa. "He's a scandalous villain," I replied, in a transport of fury, "who brands me with that imputation! She is a thousand times more chaste than the mother that bore you; and I will assert her honour with my heart's blood!" So saying, I rushed upon him with more eagerness than address, and endeavouring to get within his point, received a wound in my neck, which redoubled my rage. He excelled me in temper as well as in skill, by which means he parried my thrusts with great calmness, until I had almost exhausted my spirits; and when he perceived me beginning to flag, attacked me fiercely in his turn. Finding himself, however, better opposed than he expected, he resolved to follow his lunge, and close with me; accordingly, his sword entered my waistcoat, on the side of the breastbone, and, running up between my shirt and skin, appeared over my shoulder. I imagined that his weapon had perforated my lungs, and, of consequence, that the wound was mortal; therefore, determined not to die unrevenged, I seized his shell, which was close to my breast, before he could disentangle his point, and, keeping it fast with my left hand, shortened my own sword with my right, intending to run him through the heart; but he received the thrust in the left arm, which penetrated up to the shoulder-blade. Disappointed

in this expectation, and afraid still that death would frustrate my revenge, I grappled with him, and, being much the stronger, threw him upon the ground, where I wrested his sword out of his hand; and, so great was my confusion, instead of turning the point upon him, struck out three of his fore teeth with the hilt. In the meantime, our servants seeing us fall, ran up to separate and assist us; but, before their approach, I was upon my feet, and had discovered that my supposed mortal wound was only a slight scratch. The knowledge of my own safety disarmed me of a good deal of my resentment, and I began to inquire with some concern into the situation of my antagonist, who remained on the ground bleeding plentifully at his mouth and arm; I helped his footman to raise him, and having bound up his wound with my handkerchief, assured him it was not dangerous; I likewise restored his sword, and offered to support him to his house. He thanked me with an air of sullen dignity, and, whispering that I should hear from him soon, went away, leaning on his servant's shoulder.

I was surprised at this promise, which I construed into a threat; and resolved, if ever he should call me out again, to use whatever advantage fortune might give me over him in another manner. In the meantime, I had leisure to take notice of Strap, who seemed quite stupefied with horror. I comforted him with an assurance that I had received no damage, and explained the nature of this affair as we walked homeward. By the time I had got into my apartment, I found the wound in my neck

stiff and uneasy, and a good deal of clotted blood run down upon my shirt. Upon which, I pulled off my coat and waistcoat, and unbuttoned my collar, that I might dress it with more ease. My friend no sooner perceived my shirt quite dyed with blood, than, imagining I had got at least twenty thousand wounds, he cried, "O Jesus!" and fell flat on the floor. I stopped the bleeding with a little dry lint, and applying a plaster over it, cleansed myself from the gore, shifted and dressed, while he lay senseless at my feet; so that, when he recovered, and saw me perfectly well, he could scarce believe his own eyes. Now that the danger was past, I was very well pleased with what had happened, hoping that it would soon become known, and, consequently, dignify my character not a little in this place. I was also proud of having shown myself, in some shape, worthy the love of Narcissa, who, I was persuaded, would not think the worse of me for what I had done.

CHAPTER SIXTY

I AM VISITED BY FREEMAN, WITH WHOM I APPEAR IN PUBLIC, AND AM CARESSED — AM SENT FOR BY LORD QUIVERWIT, WHOSE PRESENCE I QUIT IN A PASSION — NARCISSA IS CARRIED OFF BY HER BROTHER — I INTEND TO PURSUE HIM, AND AM DISSUADED BY MY FRIEND — ENGAGE IN PLAY, AND LOSE ALL MY MONEY — SET OUT FOR LONDON — TRY MY FORTUNE AT THE GAMING-TABLE WITHOUT SUCCESS — RECEIVE A LETTER FROM NARCISSA — BILK MY TAILOR.

WHILE I entertained myself with these reflections, the news of the duel being communicated by some unknown channel, spread all over the town. I was visited by Freeman, who testified his surprise at finding me; for he was told that Lord Quiverwit being dead of his wounds, I had absconded, in order to avoid the cognizance of the law. I asked if people guessed the occasion of the quarrel; and, understanding it was attributed to his lordship's resentment of my reply in the Long Room, confirmed that conjecture, glad to find Narcissa unsuspected. My friend, after I had assured him that my antagonist was in no danger, wished me joy of the event, than which, he said, nothing could happen more opportunely to sup-

port the idea he had given of my character to his friends, among whom he had been very assiduous in my behalf.

On the strength of this assurance, I went with him to the coffee-house, where I was saluted by a great many of those very persons who had shunned me the preceding day; and I found everybody making merry with the story of Melinda's French gallant. While I remained in this place, I received a message from Lord Quiverwit, desiring, if I was not engaged, to see me at his house.

Thither I immediately repaired, and was conducted to an apartment, where I was received by his lordship in bed. When we were left by ourselves, he thanked me, in very polite terms, for having used the advantage fortune had given me over him with such moderation; and asked pardon for any offence his resentment might have prompted him to commit. "I would willingly," said he, "make you my friend; but as it is impossible for me to divest myself of my passion for Narcissa, I am too well convinced of your sentiments to think we shall ever agree on that subject. I took the liberty, therefore, of sending for you, in order to own candidly that I cannot help opposing your success with that young lady; though, at the same time, I promise to regulate my opposition by the dictates of justice and honour. This, however, I think proper to advertise you of, that she has no independent fortune; and if you should even succeed in your addresses, you would have the mortification to see her reduced to indigence, unless you have wherewithal to support her; and I am credibly

informed of your incapacity that way. Nay, I will confess, that, urged by this consideration, I have actually sent notice to her brother of the progress I suspect you have made in her affection, and desired him to take his precautions accordingly." Alarmed and provoked at this information, I told his lordship, that I did not see how he could reconcile that piece of conduct with his profession of open dealing, and flung away from him in a passion.

As I walked homeward, in hope of hearing from my mistress as usual, by means of Miss Williams, I was surprised with the waving of a handkerchief from the window of a coach and six that passed by me at full speed; and, upon further observation, I saw a servant on horseback riding after it, who, I knew by his livery, belonged to the squire. Thunderstruck with this discovery, the knowledge of my misfortune rushed all at once on my reflection! I guessed immediately that the signal was made by the dear hand of Narcissa, who, being hurried away in consequence of Lord Quiverwit's message to her brother, had no other method of relating her distress, and imploring my assistance. Frantic with this conjecture, I ran to my lodgings, snatched my pistols, and ordered Strap to get post-horses, with such incoherence of speech and disorder, that the poor valet, terrified with the suspicion of another duel, instead of providing what I desired, went forthwith to Freeman, who, being informed of my behaviour, came straight to my apartment, and conjured me so pathetically to make him acquainted with the cause

of my uneasiness, that I could not refuse telling him my happiness was fled with Narcissa, and that I must retrieve her, or perish. He represented the madness of such an undertaking, and endeavoured to divert me from it with great strength of friendship and reason. But all his arguments would have been ineffectual, had he not put me in mind of the dependence I ought to have on the love of Narcissa, and the attachment of her maid, who could not fail of finding opportunities to advertise me of their situation; and at the same time demonstrated the injury my charmer's reputation must suffer from my precipitate retreat.

I was convinced and composed by these considerations. I appeared in public with an air of tranquillity, was well received by the best company in town, and, my misfortune taking air, condoled accordingly; while I had the satisfaction of seeing Melinda so universally discountenanced, that she was fain to return to London, in order to avoid the scoffs and censure of the ladies of Bath. But though the hope of hearing from the darling of my soul supported my spirits a little while, I began to be very uneasy, when, at the end of several weeks, I found that expectation disappointed. In short, melancholy and despondence took possession of my soul; and repining at that Providence, which, by acting the stepmother towards me, kept me from the fruition of my wishes, I determined in a fit of despair, to risk all I had at the gaming-table, with a view of acquiring a fortune sufficient to render me independent for life, or of plunging myself into such a state of misery as would

effectually crush every ambitious hope that now tortured my imagination.

Actuated by this fatal resolution, I engaged in play, and, after some turns of fortune, found myself at the end of three days worth a thousand pounds; but it was not my intention to stop here, for which cause I kept Strap ignorant of my success, and continued my career, until I was reduced to five guineas, which I would have hazarded also, had I not been ashamed to fall from a bet of two hundred pounds to such a petty sum.

Having thus executed my scheme, I went home, amazed to find myself so much at ease, and informed my friend Strap of my mischance, with such calmness, that he, imagining I joked, affected to receive the tidings with great equanimity. But both he and I found ourselves mistaken very soon. I had misinterpreted my own stupidity into deliberate resignation; and he had reason to believe me in earnest, when he saw me next morning agitated with the most violent despair, which he endeavoured to alleviate with all the consolation in his power.

In one of my lucid intervals, however, I charged him to take a place in the stage-coach for London, and, in the meantime, pay my debts in Bath, which amounted to thirty shillings only. Without taking leave of my friends, I embarked, Strap having the good fortune to find a return horse, and arrived in town, without having met with anything remarkable on the road. While we crossed Bagshot Heath, I was seized with a sort of inclination to retrieve my fortune, by laying passengers under contribution

in some such place. My thoughts were so circumstanced at this time, that I should have digested the crime of robbery, so righteously had I concerted my plan, and ventured my life in the execution, had I not been deterred by reflecting upon the infamy that attends detection.

The apartment I formerly lived in being unengaged, I took possession of it, and next day went in quest of Banter, who received me with open arms, in expectation of having his bond discharged to his liking. But when he understood what had happened, his countenance changed of a sudden; and he told me, with a dryness of displeasure peculiar to himself, that, if he was in my place, he would put it out of fortune's power to play him such another trick, and be avenged of his own indiscretion at once. When I desired him to explain his meaning, he pointed to his neck, raised himself on his tip-toes, and was going away without any further ceremony, when I put him in mind of my indigence, and demanded the five guineas I had formerly lent him. "Five guineas!" cried he; "Zounds! had you acted with common prudence, you might have had twenty thousand in your pocket by this time. I depended upon five hundred from you, as much as if I had had notes for it in the bank; and by all the rules of equity, you are indebted to me for that sum." I was neither pleased nor convinced by this computation, and insisted on my right with such determined obstinacy, that he was fain to alter his tone, and appease my clamour, by assuring me, that he was not master of five shillings. Society in distress generally promotes

good understanding among people; from being a dun, I descended to be a client, and asked his advice about repairing my losses. He counselled me to have recourse again to the gaming-table, where I succeeded so well before, and put myself in a condition by selling my watch. I followed his directions, and, having accommodated him with a few pieces, went to the place, where I lost every shilling.

Then I returned to my lodgings full of desperate resolution, and, having made Strap acquainted with my fate, ordered him to pawn my sword immediately, that I might be enabled to make another effort. This affectionate creature no sooner understood my purpose, than, seized with insuppressible sorrow at the prospect of my misery, he burst into tears, and asked what I proposed to do, after the small sum he could raise on the sword should be spent? "On my own account," said he, "I am quite unconcerned; for, while God spares me health and these ten fingers, I can earn a comfortable subsistence anywhere; but what must become of you, who have less humility to stoop, and more appetites to gratify?" Here I interrupted him, by saying, with a gloomy aspect, I should never want a resource while I had a loaded pistol in possession. Stupefied with horror at this dreadful insinuation, he stood mute for some time, and then broke out into, "God of his infinite mercy enable you to withstand that temptation of the devil! Consider your immortal soul — there is no repentance in the grave. O Lord! that ever we should come to this. — Are we not enjoined to resign ourselves to the will of Heaven! — where is your patience? *Durum*

patientia frango — you are but a young man — there may be many good things in store for you — *Accidit in puncto, quod non speratur, in anno* — remember your uncle, Mr. Bowling; perhaps he is now on his voyage homeward, pleasing himself with the hopes of seeing and relieving you; nay, peradventure he is already arrived, for the ship was expected about this time." A ray of hope shot athwart my soul at this suggestion; I thanked my friend for his seasonable recollection, and, after having promised to take no resolution till his return, dismissed him to Wapping for intelligence.

In his absence I was visited by Banter, who being informed of my bad luck at play, told me, that fortune would probably be one day weary of persecuting me. "In the meantime," said he, "here is a letter for you, which I received just now enclosed in one from Freeman." I snatched it with eagerness, and knowing the superscription to be of Narcissa's handwriting, kissed it with transport, and, having opened it, read:

"It is with great difficulty that I have stolen from the observation of those spies who are set over me, this opportunity of telling you, that I was suddenly carried away from Bath by my brother, who was informed of our correspondence by Lord Quiverwit, whom, I since understand, you have wounded in a duel on my account. As I am fully convinced of your honour and love, I hope I shall never hear of such desperate proofs of either for the future. I am so strictly watched, that it will be impossible for you to see me, until my brother's suspicions shall abate, or Heaven contrive some other unfore-

seen event in our behalf. In the meantime you may depend on the constancy and affection of

"Your own NARCISSA."

"*P. S.* — Miss Williams, who is my fellow-prisoner, desires to be remembered to you. We are both in good health, and only in pain for you, especially as it will be impracticable for you to convey any message or letter to the place of our confinement; for which reason, pray desist from the attempt, that, by miscarrying, might prolong our captivity.

"N——."

This kind letter afforded me great consolation. I communicated it to Banter, and at the same time showed him her picture. He approved of her beauty and good sense, and could not help owning, that my neglect of Miss Snapper was excusable, when such a fine creature engrossed my attention.

I began to be reconciled to my fate, and imagined that, if I could contrive means of subsisting until my uncle should arrive, in case he was not already at home, he would enable me to do something effectual in behalf of my love and fortune. I therefore consulted Banter about a present supply, who no sooner understood that I had credit with a tailor, than he advised me to take off two or three suits of rich clothes, and convert them into cash, by selling them at half-price to a salesman in Monmouth Street. I was startled at this proposal, which I thought savoured a little of fraud; but he rendered it palatable, by observing, that in a few months I might be in a condition to do everybody justice; and, in the mean-

time, I was acquitted by the honesty of my intention. I suffered myself to be persuaded by his salvo, by which my necessity, rather than my judgment, was convinced; and when I found there were no accounts of the ship in which my uncle embarked, actually put the scheme in practice, and raised by it five and twenty guineas, paying him for his advice with the odd five.

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

AM ARRESTED — CARRIED TO THE MARSHALSEA — FIND MY OLD ACQUAINTANCE BEAU JACKSON IN THAT JAIL — HE INFORMS ME OF HIS ADVENTURES — STRAP ARRIVES, AND WITH DIFFICULTY IS COMFORTED — JACKSON INTRODUCES ME TO A POET — I ADMIRE HIS CONVERSATION AND CAPACITY — AM DEEPLY AFFECTED WITH MY MISFORTUNE — STRAP HIRES HIMSELF AS A JOURNEYMAN BARBER.

BUT this expedient was in a few weeks attended with a consequence I did not foresee; a player having purchased one of the suits which were exposed to sale, appeared in it on the stage one night, while my tailor unfortunately happened to be present. He knew it immediately, and, inquiring minutely into the affair, discovered my whole contrivance; upon which he came to my lodgings, and, telling me that he was very much straitened for want of money, presented his bill, which amounted to fifty pounds. Surprised at this unexpected address, I affected to treat him cavalierly, swore some oaths, asked if he doubted my honour, and, telling him I should take care whom I dealt with for the future, bade him come again in three days. He obeyed me punctually, demanded his money, and, finding himself amused with bare promises, arrested me that very day in the

street. I was not much shocked at this adventure, which, indeed, put an end to a state of horrible expectation; but I refused to go to a spunging-house, where I heard there was nothing but the most flagrant imposition; and a coach being called, was carried to the Marshalsea, attended by a bailiff and his follower, who were very much disappointed and chagrined at my resolution.

The turnkey, guessing from my appearance that I had money in my pocket, received me with the repetition of the Latin word *depone*, and gave me to understand, that I must pay beforehand for the apartment I should choose to dwell in. I desired to see his conveniencies, and hired a small paltry bedchamber for a crown a week, which, in any other place, would have let for half the money. Having taken possession of this dismal habitation, I sent for Strap, and my thoughts were busied in collecting matter of consolation to that faithful squire, when somebody knocked at my door, which I no sooner opened, than a young fellow entered, in very shabby clothes, and marvellous foul linen. After a low bow, he called me by my name, and asked if I had forgot him. His voice assisted me in recollecting his person, whom I soon recognised to be my old acquaintance Jackson, of whom mention is made in the first part of my memoirs. I saluted him cordially, expressed my satisfaction of finding him alive, and condoled him on his present situation, which, however, did not seem to affect him much, for he laughed very heartily at the occasion of our meeting so unexpectedly in this place.

Our mutual compliments being past, I inquired

about his amour with the lady of fortune, which seemed to be so near a happy conclusion when I had the pleasure of seeing him last; and, after an immoderate fit of laughter, he gave me to understand, that he had been egregiously bit in that affair. "You must know," said he, "that a few days after our adventure with the bawd and her b—ches, I found means to be married to that same fine lady you speak of, and passed the night with her at her lodgings, so much to her satisfaction, that early in the morning, after a good deal of snivelling and sobbing, she owned, that, far from being an heiress of great fortune, she was no other than a common woman of the town, who had decoyed me into matrimony, in order to enjoy the privilege of a *femme couverte;* and that, unless I made my escape immediately, I should be arrested for a debt of her contracting, by bailiffs employed and instructed for that purpose. Startled at this intimation, I rose in a twinkling, and taking leave of my spouse with several hearty d—ns, got safe into the verge of the court, where I kept snug until I was appointed surgeon's mate of a man-of-war at Portsmouth; for which place I set out on Sunday, went on board of my ship, in which I sailed to the Straits, where I had the good fortune to be made surgeon of a sloop that came home a few months after, and was put out of commission; whereupon I came to London, imagining myself forgotten, and freed from my wife and her creditors; but had not been in town a week before I was arrested for a debt of her's, amounting to twenty pounds, and brought to this place, where I have

been fixed by another action since that time. However, you know my disposition; I defy care and anxiety; and, being on the half-pay list, make shift to live here tolerably easy." I congratulated him on his philosophy, and remembering that I was in his debt, repaid the money he formerly lent me, which, I believe, was far from being unseasonable. I then inquired about the economy of the place, which he explained to my satisfaction; and after we had agreed to mess together, he was just going to give orders for dinner, when Strap arrived.

I never in my life saw sorrow so extravagantly expressed in any countenance as in that of my honest friend, which was, indeed, particularly adapted by nature for such impressions. When we were left by ourselves, I communicated to him my disaster, and endeavoured to console him with the same arguments he had formerly used to me, withal representing the fair chance I had of being relieved in a short time by Mr. Bowling. But his grief was unutterable; he seemed to give attention without listening, and wrung his hands in silence; so that I was in a fair way of being infected by his behaviour, when Jackson returned, and perceiving the deference I paid to Strap, although in a footman's habit, distributed his crumbs of comfort with such mirth, jollity, and unconcern, that the features of the distressed squire relaxed by degrees; he recovered the use of speech, and began to be a little more reconciled to this lamentable event. We dined together on boiled beef and greens, brought from a cook's shop in the neighbourhood; and although this meal was served up in a manner little

corresponding with the sphere of life in which I had lately lived, I made a virtue of necessity, ate with good appetite, and treated my friends with a bottle of wine, which had the desired effect of increasing the good-humour of my fellow-prisoner, and exhilarating the spirits of Strap, who now talked cavalierly of my misfortune.

After dinner, Jackson left us to our private affairs; when I desired my friend to pack up all our things and carry them to some cheap lodging he should choose for himself in the neighbourhood of the Marshalsea, after he had discharged my lodging, for which purpose I gave him money. I likewise recommended to him the keeping my misfortune secret, and saying to my landlord, or any other who should inquire for me, that I was gone into the country for a few weeks; at the same time I laid strong injunctions upon him to call every second day upon Banter, in case he should receive any letter for me from Narcissa, by the channel of Freeman; and by all means to leave a direction for himself, at my uncle's lodgings in Wapping, by which I might be found when my kinsman should arrive.

When he departed to execute these orders, which, by the bye, were punctually performed that very night, I found myself so little seasoned to my situation, that I dreaded reflection, and sought shelter from it in the company of the beau, who, promising to regale me with a lecture upon taste, conducted me to the common side, where I saw a number of naked miserable wretches assembled together. We had not been here many minutes, when a figure

appeared, wrapt in a dirty rug, tied about his loins with two pieces of list, of different colours, knotted together; having a black bushy beard, and his head covered with a huge mass of brown periwig, which seemed to have been ravished from the head of some scarecrow. This apparition, stalking in with great solemnity, made a profound bow to the audience, who signified their approbation by a general response of "How d' ye do, doctor?" He then turned towards us, and honoured Jackson with a particular salutation. Upon which my friend, in a formal manner, introduced him to me, by the name of Mr. Melopoyn. This ceremony being over, he advanced into the middle of the congregation, which crowded around him, and hemming three times, to my utter astonishment, pronounced, with great significance of voice and gesture, a very elegant and ingenious discourse upon the difference between genius and taste, illustrating his assertions with apt quotations from the best authors, ancient as well as modern. When he had finished his harangue, which lasted a full hour, he bowed again to the spectators, not one of whom, I am informed, understood so much as a sentence of what he had uttered. They manifested, however, their admiration and esteem by a voluntary contribution, which, Jackson told me, one week with another, amounted to eighteen pence. This moderate stipend, together with some small presents that he received for making up differences, and deciding causes amongst the prisoners, just enabled him to breathe and walk about, in the grotesque figure I have described. I understood, also, that he was an excellent poet, and

had composed a tragedy, which was allowed by everybody who had seen it to be a performance of great merit; that his learning was infinite, his morals unexceptionable, and his modesty invincible.

Such a character could not fail of attracting my regard; I longed impatiently to be acquainted with him, and desired Jackson would engage him to spend the evening in my apartment. My request was granted, he favoured us with his company, and in the course of our conversation, perceiving that I had a strong passion for the *Belles-Lettres*, acquitted himself so well on that subject, that I expressed a fervent desire of seeing his productions. In this point, too, he gratified my inclination; he promised to bring his tragedy to my room next day, and in the meantime entertained me with some detached pieces, which gave me a very advantageous idea of his poetical talent. Among other things, I was particularly pleased with some elegies, in imitation of Tibullus; one of which I beg leave to submit to the reader, as a specimen of his complexion and capacity.

Where now are all my flattering dreams of joy?
Monimia, give my soul her wonted rest:—
Since first thy beauty fix'd my roving eye,
Heart-gnawing cares corrode my pensive breast!

Let happy lovers fly where pleasures call,
With festive songs beguile the fleeting hour;
Lead Beauty through the mazes of the ball,
Or press her wanton in Love's roseate bower.

For me, no more I 'll range th' empurpled mead,
Where shepherds pipe, and virgins dance around;
Nor wander through the woodbine's fragrant shade,
To hear the music of the grove resound.

MELOPOYN'S ELEGY

I 'll seek some lonely church, or dreary hall,
Where fancy paints the glimm'ring taper blue,
  Where damps hang mould'ring on the ivy'd wall,
And sheeted ghosts drink up the midnight dew.

  There, leagu'd with hopeless anguish and despair,
Awhile in silence o'er my fate repine:
  Then, with a long farewell to love and care,
To kindred dust my weary limbs consign.

  Wilt thou, Monimia, shed a gracious tear
On the cold grave where all my sorrows rest;
  Strew vernal flowers, applaud my love sincere,
And bid the turf lie easy on my breast?

I was wonderfully affected with this pathetic complaint, which seemed so well calculated for my own disappointment in love, that I could not help attaching the idea of Narcissa to the name of Monimia, and of forming such melancholy presages of my passion, that I could not recover my tranquillity, and was fain to have recourse to the bottle, which prepared me for a profound sleep, that I could not otherwise have enjoyed. Whether these impressions invited and introduced a train of other melancholy reflections, or my fortitude was all exhausted in the effort I made against despondence, during the first day of my imprisonment, I cannot determine; but I awoke in the horrors, and found my imagination haunted with such dismal apparitions, that I was ready to despair; and I believe the reader will own, I had no great cause to congratulate myself, when I considered my situation. I was interrupted in the midst of these gloomy apprehensions by the arrival of Strap, who contributed not a little to the re-establishment of my peace, by

letting me know that he had hired himself as a journeyman barber; by which means he would be able not only to save me a considerable expense, but even make shift to lay up something for my subsistence after my money should be spent, in case I should not be relieved before.

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

I READ MELOPOYN'S TRAGEDY, AND CONCEIVE A VAST OPINION OF HIS GENIUS — HE RECOUNTS HIS ADVENTURES.

WHILE we ate our breakfast together, I made him acquainted with the character and condition of the poet, who came in with his play at that instant, and imagining we were engaged about business, could not be prevailed upon to sit; but, leaving his performance, went away. My friend's tender heart was melted at the sight of a gentleman and Christian (for he had a great veneration for both these epithets) in such misery; and assented, with great cheerfulness, to a proposal I made of clothing him with our superfluities; a task with which he charged himself, and departed immediately to perform it.

He was no sooner gone, than I locked my door, and sat down to the tragedy, which I read to the end with vast pleasure, not a little amazed at the conduct of the managers who had rejected it. The fable, in my opinion, was well chosen, and naturally conducted; the incidents interesting, the characters beautifully contrasted, strongly marked, and well supported; the diction poetical, spirited, and correct; the unities of the drama maintained with the most scrupulous ex-

actness; the opening gradual and engaging, the *peripeteia* surprising, and the catastrophe affecting. In short, I judged it by the laws of Aristotle and Horace, and could find nothing in it exceptionable, but a little too much embellishment in some few places, which objection he removed to my satisfaction, by a quotation from Aristotle's *Poetics*, importing, that the least interesting parts of a poem ought to be raised and dignified by the charms and energy of diction.

I revered his genius, and was seized with an eager curiosity to know the particular events of a fortune so unworthy of his merit. At that instant Strap returned with a bundle of clothes, which I sent with my compliments to Mr. Melopoyn, as a small token of my regard, and desired the favour of his company to dinner. He accepted my present and invitation, and in less than half an hour made his appearance in a decent dress, which altered his figure very much to his advantage. I perceived, by his countenance, that his heart was big with gratitude, and endeavoured to prevent his acknowledgments, by asking pardon for the liberty I had taken; he made no reply, but, with an aspect full of admiration and esteem, bowed to the ground, while the tears gushed from his eyes. Affected with these symptoms of an ingenuous mind, I shifted the conversation, and complimented him on his performance, which, I assured him, afforded me infinite pleasure. My approbation made him happy; dinner being served, and Jackson arrived, I begged their permission for Strap to sit at table with us, after having informed them, that he was a person to whom I was extremely obliged; they were

kind enough to grant that favour, and we ate together with great harmony and satisfaction.

Our meal being ended, I expressed my wonder at the little regard Mr. Melopoyn had met with from the world; and signified a desire of hearing how he had been treated by the managers of the playhouses, to whom I understood from Jackson he had offered his tragedy without success. "There is so little entertaining in the incidents of my life," said he, "that I am sure the recital will not recompense your attention; but, since you discover an inclination to know them, I understand my duty too well to disappoint your desire.

"My father, who was a curate in the country, being, by the narrowness of his circumstances, hindered from maintaining me at the university, took the charge of my education upon himself, and laboured with such industry and concern in the undertaking, that I had little cause to regret the want of public masters. Being at great pains to consult my natural bias, he discovered in me, betimes, an inclination for poetry; upon which he recommended me to an intimate acquaintance with the classics, in the cultivation of which he assisted me with paternal zeal and uncommon erudition. When he thought me sufficiently acquainted with the ancients, he directed my studies to the best modern authors, French and Italian, as well as English, and laid a particular injunction upon me to make myself master of my mother tongue.

"About the age of eighteen, I grew ambitious of undertaking a work of some consequence; and, with

my father's approbation, actually planned the tragedy you have read; but, before I had finished four acts, that indulgent parent died, and left my mother and me in very indigent circumstances. A near relation, compassionating our distress, took us into his family, where I brought my fable to a conclusion; and soon after that period my mother quitted this life. When my sorrow for this melancholy event had subsided, I told my kinsman, who was a farmer, that, having paid my last duty to my parent, I had now no attachment to detain me in the country, and therefore was resolved to set out for London, and offer my play to the stage, where I did not doubt of acquiring a large share of fame as well as fortune; in which case I should not be unmindful of my friends and benefactors. My cousin was ravished with the prospect of my felicity, and willingly contributed towards the expense of fitting me out for my expedition.

"Accordingly I took a place in the waggon, and arrived in town, where I hired an apartment in a garret, willing to live as frugal as possible, until I should know what I had to expect from the manager, to whom I intended to offer my play; for, though I looked upon myself as perfectly secure of a good reception, imagining that a patentee would be as eager to receive, as I to present my production, I did not know whether or not he might be pre-engaged in favour of another author, a circumstance that would certainly retard my success. On this consideration, too, I determined to be speedy in my application, and even to wait upon one of the managers the very next day. For this purpose, I inquired of my

landlord, if he knew where either or both of them lived; and he, being curious to know my business, and at the same time appearing to be a very honest friendly man (a tallow-chandler), I made him acquainted with my design; upon which he told me that I went the wrong way to work; that I would not find such easy access to a manager as I imagined; and that, if I delivered my performance without proper recommendation, it would be as one to a thousand if ever it should be minded. 'Take my advice,' said he, 'and your business is done. One of the patentees is a good Catholic, as I am, and uses the same father who confesses me. I will make you acquainted with this good priest, who is an excellent scholar, and if he should approve of your play, his recommendation will go a great way in determining Mr. Supple to bring it on the stage.'

"I applauded his expedient, and was introduced to the friar, who, having perused the tragedy, was pleased to signify his approbation, and commended me, in particular, for having avoided all reflections upon religion. He promised to use all his influence with his son Supple in my behalf, and to inform himself that very day at what time it would be proper for me to wait upon him with the piece. He was punctual in performing his engagement, and next morning gave me to understand that he had mentioned my affair to the manager, and that I had no more to do than to go to his house any time in the forenoon, and make use of his name, upon which I should find immediate admittance. I took this advice, put my performance in my bosom, and, having

received directions, went immediately to the house of Mr. Supple, and knocked at the door, which had a wicket in the middle, faced with a network of iron. Through this a servant having viewed me for some time, demanded to know my business. I told him my business was with Mr. Supple, and that I came from Mr. O'Varnish. He examined my appearance once more, then went away, returned in a few minutes, and said his master was busy, and could not be seen. Although I was a little mortified at my disappointment, I was persuaded that my reception was owing to Mr. Supple's ignorance of my errand; and, that I might meet with no more obstructions of the same kind, I desired Mr. O'Varnish to be my introductor the next time. He complied with my request, and obtained immediate admittance to the manager, who received me with the utmost civility, and promised to read my play with the first convenience.

"By his own appointment, I called again in a fortnight, but he was gone out; I returned in a week after, and the poor gentleman was extremely ill; I renewed my visit in a fortnight after that, and he assured me he had been so much fatigued with business, that he had not been able as yet to read it to an end; but he would take the first opportunity; and, in the meantime, observed, that what he had just seen of it was very entertaining. I comforted myself with this declaration a few weeks longer, at the end of which I appeared again before his wicket, was let in, and found him laid up with the gout. I no sooner entered his chamber, than, looking at me with a languishing eye, he said, 'Mr. Melopoyn, I'm

heartily sorry for an accident that has happened during my illness. You must know that my eldest boy, finding your manuscript upon the table in the dining-room, where I used to read it, carried it into the kitchen, and leaving it there, a negligent wench of a cook-maid, mistaking it for waste paper, has expended it all but a few leaves in singeing fowls upon the spit. But I hope the misfortune is not irreparable, since, no doubt, you have several copies.'

"I protest to you, my good friend, Mr. Random, I was extremely shocked at this information; but the good-natured gentleman seemed to be so much affected with my misfortune, that I suppressed my concern, and told him, that although I had not another copy, I should be able to retrieve the loss by writing another from my memory, which was very tenacious. You cannot imagine how well pleased Mr. Supple was at this assurance; he begged I would set about it immediately, and carefully revolve and recollect every circumstance, before I pretended to commit it to paper, that it might be the same individual play that he had perused. Encouraged by this injunction, which plainly demonstrated how much he interested himself in the affair, I taxed my remembrance and industry, and in three weeks produced the exact image of the former, which was conveyed to him by my good friend, Father O'Varnish, who told me next day that Mr. Supple would revise it superficially, in order to judge of its sameness with the other, and then give his final answer. For this examination I allotted a week; and in full confidence of seeing it acted in a little while, demanded an audience of the

manager, when that term was expired. But alas! the season had slipped away insensibly; he convinced me, that, if my play had been put into rehearsal at that time, it could not have been ready for performing until the end of March, when the benefit nights came on; consequently it would have interfered with the interest of the players, whom it was not my business to disoblige.

"I was fain to acquiesce in these reasons, which to be sure were extremely just, and to reserve my performance for the next season, when he hoped I would not be so unlucky: although it was a grievous disappointment to me, who by this time began to want both money and necessaries; having, on the strength of my expectation from the theatre, launched out into some extravagances, by which the sum I brought to town was already almost consumed. Indeed, I ought to be ashamed at this circumstance of my conduct; for my finances were sufficient, with good economy, to have maintained me comfortably a whole year. You will perhaps be amazed when I tell you, that in six months I expended not a farthing less than ten guineas: but when one considers the temptations to which a young man is exposed in this great city, especially if he is addicted to pleasure, as I am, the wonder will vanish, or at least abate. Nor was the cause of my concern limited to my own situation entirely: I had writ an account of my good reception to my kinsman the farmer, and desired him to depend upon me for the money he had kindly accommodated me with about the end of February; which promise I now found myself unable to perform. However, there was

no remedy but patience. I applied to my landlord, who was a very good-natured man, candidly owned my distress, and begged his advice in laying down some plan for my subsistence. He readily promised to consult his confessor on this subject, and told me, I was welcome, in the meantime, to lodge and board with him, until fortune should put it in my power to make restitution.

"Mr. O'Varnish, being informed of my necessity, offered to introduce me to the author of a weekly paper, who, he did not doubt, would employ me in that way, provided he should find me duly qualified; but, upon inquiry, I understood that this journal was calculated to foment divisions in the commonwealth, and therefore I desired to be excused from engaging in it. He then proposed that I should write something in the poetical way, which I might dispose of to a bookseller for a pretty sum of ready money, and perhaps establish my own character into the bargain; this event would infallibly procure friends, and my tragedy would appear next season to the best advantage, by being supported both by interest and reputation. I was charmed with this prospect, and, having heard what friends Mr. Pope acquired by his pastorals, set about a work of that kind, and in less than six weeks, composed as many eclogues, which I forthwith offered to an eminent bookseller, who desired me to leave them for his perusal, and he would give me an answer in two days. At the end of that time, I went to him, when he returned the poems, telling me, they would not answer his purpose, and sweetened his refusal by saying there were some good clever lines

in them. Not a little dejected at this rebuff, which I learned from Mr. O'Varnish was owing to the opinion of another author, whom this bookseller always consulted on these occasions, I applied to another person of the same profession who told me the town was cloyed with pastorals, and advised me, if I intended to profit by my talents, to write something satirical or luscious, such as *The Button Hole*, *Shockey and Towzer*, *The Leaky Vessel*, etc. — and yet this was a man in years, who wore a reverend periwig, looked like a senator, and went regularly to church. Be that as it will, I scorned to prostitute my pen in the manner he proposed, and carried my papers to a third, who assured me, that poetry was entirely out of his way; and asked if I had got never a piece of secret history, thrown into a series of letters, or a volume of adventures, such as those of Robinson Crusoe and Colonel Jack, or a collection of conundrums, wherewith to entertain the plantations? Being quite unfurnished for this dealer, I had recourse to another with as little success; and I verily believe was rejected by the whole trade.

"I was afterwards persuaded to offer myself as a translator, and accordingly repaired to a person, who was said to entertain numbers of that class in his pay; he assured me he had already a great deal of that work on his hands, which he did not know what to do with; observed that translation was a mere drug, that branch of literature being overstocked with an inundation of authors from North Britain; and asked what I would expect per sheet, for rendering the Latin classics into English. That I might not make

myself too cheap, I determined to set a high price upon my qualifications, and demanded half a guinea for every translated sheet. 'Half a guinea!' cried he, staring at me, then paused a little, and said, 'he had no occasion for my service at present.' I found my error, and, resolving to make amends, fell one half in my demand; upon which he stared at me again, and told me his hands were full. I attempted others, without finding employment, and was actually reduced to a very uncomfortable prospect, when I bethought myself of offering my talents to the printers of halfpenny ballads, and other such occasional essays as are hawked about the streets. With this view, I applied to one of the most noted and vociferous of this tribe, who directed me to a person whom I found entertaining a whole crowd of them with gin, bread, and cheese; he carried me into a little back parlour, very neatly furnished, where I signified my desire of being enrolled among his writers; and was asked what kind of composition I professed? understanding that my inclination leaned towards poetry, he expressed his satisfaction, telling me one of his poets had lost his senses, and was confined in Bedlam, and the other was become dozed with drinking drams; so that he had not done anything tolerable these many weeks. When I proposed that we should enter into terms of agreement, he gave me to understand, that his bargains were always conditional, and his authors paid in proportion to the sale of their works.

"Having therefore settled these conditions, which, I do assure you, were not very advantageous to me,

he assigned me a subject for a ballad, which was to be finished in two hours; and I returned to my garret in order to perform his injunction. As the theme happened to suit my fancy, I completed a pretty sort of an ode within the time prescribed, and brought it to him big with hope of profit and applause. He read it in a twinkling, and, to my utter astonishment, told me, it would not do, though indeed he owned I wrote a good hand, and spelled very well, but my language was too high-flown, and of consequence not at all adapted to the capacity and taste of his customers. I promised to rectify that mistake, and in half an hour humbled my style to the comprehension of vulgar readers; he approved of the alteration, and gave me some hopes of succeeding in time, though he observed, that my performance was very deficient in the quaintness of expression that pleases the multitude; however, to encourage me, he ventured the expense of printing and paper, and, if I remember aright, my share of the sale amounted to fourpence halfpenny.

"From that day I studied the Grub Street manner with great diligence, and at length became such a proficient, that my works were in great request among the most polite of the chairmen, draymen, hackney coachmen, footmen, and servant-maids. Nay, I have enjoyed the pleasure of seeing my productions adorned with cuts, pasted upon the wall as ornaments in beer cellars and cobblers' stalls, and have actually heard them sung in clubs of substantial tradesmen. But empty praise, you know, my dear friend, will not supply the cravings of nature. I

found myself in danger of starving in the midst of all my fame; for of ten songs I composed, it was well if two had the good fortune to please. For this reason I turned my thoughts to prose, and, during a tract of gloomy weather, published an apparition, on the substance of which I subsisted very comfortably a whole month; I have made many a good meal upon a monster; a rape has often afforded me great satisfaction; but a murder, well timed, was my never-failing resource. What then? I was a most miserable slave to my employers, who expected to be furnished at a minute's warning with prose and verse, just as they thought the circumstances of the times required, whether the inclination was absent or present. Upon my sincerity, Mr. Random, I have been so much pestered and besieged by those children of clamour, that life became a burden to me."

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

THE CONTINUATION AND CONCLUSION OF MR. MELOPOYN'S STORY

"I MADE shift, notwithstanding, to maintain myself till the beginning of next winter, when I renewed my addresses to my friend Mr. Supple, and was most graciously received. 'I have been thinking of your affair, Mr. Melopoyn,' said he, 'and am determined to show how far I have your interest at heart, by introducing you to a young nobleman, of my acquaintance, who is remarkable for his fine taste in dramatic writings, and is, besides, a man of such influence, that, if once he should approve of your play, his patronage will support it against all the efforts of envy and ignorance: for I do assure you that merit alone will not bring success. I have already spoke of your performance to Lord Rattle, and if you will call at my house in a day or two, you shall have a letter of introduction to his lordship.' I was sensibly touched with this mark of Mr. Supple's friendship, and looking upon my affair as already done, went home and imparted my good fortune to my landlord, who, to render my appearance more acceptable to my patron, procured a suit of new clothes for me on his own credit.

"Not to trouble you with idle particulars, I carried my tragedy to his lordship's lodgings, and sent it up, along with Mr. Supple's letter, by one of his servants, who desired me, by his lord's order, to return in a week. I did so, and was admitted to his lordship, who received me very courteously, told me he had perused my play, which he thought, on the whole, was the best *coup d'essai* he had ever seen; but that he had marked some places in the margin, which he imagined might be altered for the better. I was transported with this reception, and promised, with many acknowledgments of his lordship's generosity, to be governed solely by his advice and direction. 'Well then,' said he, 'write another fair copy with the alterations I have proposed, and bring it to me as soon as possible; for I am resolved to have it brought on the stage this winter.' You may be sure I set about this task with alacrity; and though I found his lordship's remarks much more numerous, and of less importance, than I expected, I thought it was not my interest to dispute upon trifles with my patron; therefore new modelled it, according to his desire, in less than a month.

"When I waited upon him with the manuscript, I found one of the actors at breakfast with his lordship, who immediately introduced him to my acquaintance, and desired him to read a scene of my play. This task he performed very much to my satisfaction, with regard to emphasis and pronunciation; but he signified his disgust at several words in every page, which I presuming to defend, Lord Rattle told me, with a peremptory look, I must not pretend to dis-

pute with him, who had been a player these twenty years, and understood the economy of the stage better than any man living. I was forced to submit, and his lordship proposed the same actor should read the whole play in the evening before some gentlemen of his acquaintance, whom he would convene at his lodgings for that purpose.

"I was present at the reading; and I protest to you, my dear friend, I never underwent such a severe trial in the whole course of my life as at that juncture; for although the player might be a very honest man, and a good performer, he was excessively illiterate and assuming, and made a thousand frivolous objections, which I was not permitted to answer. However, the piece was very much applauded on the whole; the gentlemen present, who, I understood, were men of fortune, promised to countenance and support it as much as they could; and Lord Rattle assuring me that he would act the part of a careful nurse to it, desired me to carry it home, and alter it immediately according to their remarks. I was fain to acquiesce in his determination, and fulfilled his injunctions with all the expedition in my power: but before I could present the new copy, my good friend Mr. Supple had disposed of his property and patent to one Mr. Brayer; so that fresh interest was to be made with the new manager. This task Lord Rattle undertook, having some acquaintance with him, and recommended my performance so strongly that it was received.

"I looked upon myself now as upon the eve of reaping the fruits of all my labour. I waited a few

days in expectation of its being put into rehearsal, and wondering at the delay, applied to my worthy patron, who excused Mr. Brayer, on account of the multiplicity of business in which he was involved, and bade me beware of teasing the patentee. I treasured up this caution, and exerted my patience three weeks longer; at the end of which his lordship gave me to understand that Mr. Brayer had read my play, and owned it had indubitable merit; but, as he had long been pre-engaged to another author, he could not possibly represent it that season; though, if I would reserve it for the next, and, in the interim, make such alterations as he had proposed by observations on the margin, I might depend upon his compliance.

"Thunderstruck at this disappointment, I could not, for some minutes, utter one syllable. At length, however, I complained bitterly of the manager's insincerity in amusing me so long, when he knew from the beginning that he could not gratify my desire. But his lordship reprimanded me for my freedom, said Mr. Brayer was a man of honour, and imputed his behaviour with respect to me to nothing else but forgetfulness. And indeed I have had some reason, since that time, to be convinced of his bad memory; for, in spite of appearances, I will not allow myself to interpret his conduct any other way. Lord Rattle, observing me very much affected with my disappointment, offered his interest to bring on my play at the other house, which I eagerly accepting, he forthwith wrote a letter of recommendation to Mr. Bellower, actor, and prime minister to Mr. Vandal, proprietor of that theatre; and desired me

to deliver it with my tragedy without loss of time. Accordingly, I hastened to his house, where, after having waited a whole hour in a lobby, I was admitted to his presence, and my performance received with great state. He told me he was extremely busy at present, but he would peruse it as soon as possible, and bade me call again in a week. I took my leave not a little astonished at the port and supercilious behaviour of this stage-player, who had not treated me with good manners; and began to think the dignity of a poet greatly impaired since the days of Euripides and Sophocles; but all this was nothing in comparison to what I have since observed.

"Well, Mr. Random, I went back at the appointed time, and was told that Mr. Bellower was engaged, and could not see me. I repeated my visit a few days after, and, having waited a considerable time, was favoured with an audience, during which he said he had not as yet read my play. Nettled at this usage, I could contain myself no longer, but telling him, I imagined he would have paid more deference to Lord Rattle's recommendation, demanded my manuscript with some expressions of resentment. 'Ay,' said he, in a theatrical tone, 'with all my heart.' Then pulling out a drawer of the bureau at which he sat, he took out a bundle, and threw it upon a table that was near him, pronouncing the word, 'There,' with great disdain. I took it up, and perceiving, with some surprise, that it was a comedy, told him it did not belong to me; upon which he offered me another, which I also disclaimed. A third was produced, and rejected for the same reason. At length he pulled

out a whole handful, and spread them before me, saying, 'There are seven — take which you please — or take them all.' I singled out my own, and went away, struck dumb with admiration at what I had seen — not so much on account of his insolence, as of the number of new plays, which from this circumstance I concluded were yearly offered to the stage. You may be sure, I did not fail to carry my complaint to my patron, who did not receive it with all the indignation I expected; but taxed me with precipitation, and told me I must lay my account with bearing the humours of the players, if I intended to write for the stage. 'There is now no other remedy,' said he, 'but to keep it till the next season for Mr. Brayer, and alter it at your leisure, in the summer, according to his directions.' I was now reduced to a terrible alternative, either to quit all hopes of my tragedy, from which I had all along promised myself a large share of fortune and reputation, or to encounter eight long months of adversity in preparing for, and expecting its appearance. This last penance, painful as it was, seemed most eligible to my reflection at that time, and therefore I resolved to undergo it.

"Why should I tire you with particulars of no consequence? I wrestled with extreme poverty until the time of my probation was expired; and went to my Lord Rattle, in order to remind him of my affair, when I understood, to my great concern, that his lordship was just on the point of going abroad, and, which was still more unfortunate for me, Mr. Brayer had gone into the country, so that my generous patron had it not in his power to introduce me personally,

as he intended. However, he wrote a very strong letter to the manager in my favour, and put him in mind of the promise he had made in behalf of my play.

"As soon as I was certified of Brayer's return, I went to his house with this letter, but was told he was gone out. I called again next day early in the morning, received the same answer, and was desired to leave my name and business; I did so, and returned the day after, when the servant still affirmed that his master was gone abroad, though I perceived him, as I retired, observing me through a window. Incensed at this discovery, I went to a coffee-house hard by, and enclosing his lordship's letter in one from myself, demanded a categorical answer. I sent it to his house, by a porter, who returned in a few minutes, and told me Mr. Brayer would be glad to see me at that instant. I obeyed the summons, and was received with such profusion of compliments and apologies, that my resentment immediately subsided, and I was even in pain for the concern which this honest man showed at the mistake of his servant, who, it seems, had been ordered to deny him to everybody but me. He expressed the utmost veneration for his good and noble friend Lord Rattle, whom he should be always proud to serve; promised to peruse the play with all despatch, and give me a meeting upon it; and, as a testimony of his esteem, made me a present of a general order for the season, by which I should be admitted to any part of the theatre.

"This was a very agreeable compliment to me, whose greatest pleasure consisted in seeing dramatic

performances; and you need not doubt that I often availed myself of my privilege. As I had an opportunity of being behind the scenes when I pleased, I frequently conversed with Mr. Brayer about my play, and asked when he intended to put it into rehearsal; but he had always so much business upon his hands, that it remained with him unopened a considerable while; and I became very uneasy about the season, that wasted apace, when I saw in the papers another new play advertised, which had been written, offered, accepted, and rehearsed in the compass of three months. You may easily guess how much I was confounded at this event. I own to you, that, in the first transports of my anger, I suspected Mr. Brayer of having acted towards me in the most pitiful perfidious manner; and was actually glad at his disappointment in the success of his favourite piece, which, by the strength of art, lingered till the third night, and then died in a deplorable manner. But, now that passion has no share in my reflection, I am willing to ascribe his behaviour to his want of memory or want of judgment, which, you know, are natural defects, that are more worthy of compassion than reproach.

"About this time I happened to be in company with a gentlewoman, who, having heard of my tragedy, told me, she was acquainted with the wife of a gentleman, who was very well known to a lady, who had great interest with a person who was intimate with Earl Sheerwit, and that, if I pleased, she would use her influence in my behalf. As this nobleman had the character of a Mæcenas in the nation, and

could stamp a value upon any work by his sole countenance and approbation, I accepted her offer with eagerness, in full confidence of seeing my reputation established, and my wishes fulfilled in a very short time, provided that I should have the good fortune to please his lordship's taste. I withdrew the manuscript from the hands of Mr. Brayer, and committed it to the care of this gentlewoman, who laboured so effectually in my interest, that in less than a month it was conveyed to the earl, and, in a few weeks after, I had the satisfaction to hear that he had read and approved it very much. Transported with this piece of intelligence, I flattered myself with the hopes of his interesting himself in its favour; but hearing no more of this matter in three whole months, I began — God forgive me! — to suspect the veracity of the person who brought me the good tidings; for I thought it impossible that a man of his rank and character, who knew the difficulty of writing a good tragedy, and understood the dignity of the work, should read and applaud an essay of this kind, without feeling an inclination to befriend the author, whom his countenance alone could raise above dependence. But it was not long before I found my friend very much wronged by my opinion.

"You must know that the civilities I had received from Lord Rattle, and the desire he manifested to promote the success of my play, encouraged me to write an account of my bad fortune to his lordship, who condescended so far as to desire, by letter, a young squire of a great estate, with whom he was intimate, to espouse my cause, and, in particular, make

me acquainted with one Mr. Marmozet, a celebrated player, who had lately appeared on the stage with astonishing éclat, and bore such sway in the house where he acted, that the managers durst not refuse anything he recommended. The young gentleman whom Lord Rattle had employed for this purpose, being diffident of his own interest with Mr. Marmozet, had recourse to a nobleman of his acquaintance, who, at his solicitation, was so good as to introduce me to him; and the conversation turning upon my performance, I was not a little surprised, as well as pleased, to hear that Earl Sheerwit had spoken very much in its praise, and even sent Mr. Marmozet the copy, with a message expressing a desire that he would act in it next season. Nor was the favourite actor backward in commending the piece, which he mentioned with some expressions of regard, that I do not choose to repeat; assuring me that he would appear in it, provided he should be engaged to play at all during the ensuing season. In the meantime, he desired I would give him leave to peruse it in the country, whither he intended to remove next day, that he might have leisure to consider and point out such alterations as might, perhaps, be necessary for its representation; and took my direction, that he might communicate by letter the observations he should make.

"Trusting to these assurances, and the interest which had been made in my behalf, I hugged myself in the expectation of seeing it not only acted, but acted to the greatest advantage; and this I thought could not fail of recompensing me in an ample

manner for the anxiety and affliction I had undergone. But six weeks being elapsed, I did not know how to reconcile Mr. Marmozet's silence with his promise of writing to me in ten days after he set out for the country; however, I was at last favoured with a letter, importing that he had made some remarks on my tragedy, which he would freely impart at meeting, and advising me to put it, without loss of time, into the hands of that manager who had the best company, as he himself was quite uncertain whether or not he should be engaged that winter. I was a good deal alarmed at this last part of his letter, and advised about it with a friend, who told me, it was a plain indication of Mr. Marmozet's desire to get rid of his promise; that his pretended uncertainty about acting next winter was no other than a scandalous evasion; for, to his certain knowledge, he was already engaged, or at least in terms with Mr. Vandal; and that his design was to disappoint me, in favour of a new comedy, which he had purchased of the author, and intended to bring upon the stage for his own advantage. In short, my dear sir, this person, who, I must own, is of a sanguine complexion, handled the moral character of Mr. Marmozet with such severity, that I began to suspect him of some particular prejudice, and put myself upon my guard against his insinuations. I ought to crave pardon for this tedious narration of trivial circumstances, which, however interesting they may be to me, must certainly be very dry and insipid to the ear of one unconcerned in the affair. But I understand the meaning of your looks, and will proceed.

"Well, sir, Mr. Marmozet, upon his return to town, treated me with uncommon complaisance, and invited me to his lodgings, where he proposed to communicate his remarks, which I confess were more unfavourable than I expected; but I answered his objections, and, as I thought, brought him over to my opinion; for, on the whole, he signified the highest approbation of the performance. In the course of our dispute, I was not a little surprised to find this poor gentleman's memory so treacherous, as to let him forget what he had said to me, before he went out of town, in regard to Earl Sheerwit's opinion of my play, which he now professed himself ignorant of; and I was extremely mortified at hearing from his own mouth, that his interest with Mr. Vandal was so very low, as to be insufficient of itself to bring a new piece upon the stage. I then begged his advice; and he counselled me to apply to Earl Sheerwit for a message in my favour to the manager, who would not presume to refuse anything recommended by so great a man; and he was so kind as to promise to second this message with all his power. I had immediate recourse to the worthy gentlewoman, my friend already mentioned, which opened the channels of her conveyance with such expedition, that in a few days I had the promise of the message, provided I could assure myself of Mr. Vandal's being unengaged to any other author; for his lordship did not choose to condescend so far, until he should understand that there was a probability (at least) of succeeding; at the same time that blessed me with this piece of news, I was startled at another, by the same channel of com-

munication; which was, that Mr. Marmozet, before he advised me to this application, had informed the earl, that he had read my play, and found it altogether unfit for the stage.

"Though I could not doubt the certainty of this intelligence, I believed there was some misapprehension in the case; and without taking any notice of it, told Mr. Marmozet the answer I had been favoured with; and he promised to ask Mr. Vandal the question proposed. I waited upon him in a day or two, when he gave me to understand that Mr. Vandal, having professed himself free of all engagements, he had put my play into his hands, and represented it as a piece strongly recommended by Earl Sheerwit, who, he assured him, would honour him with a message in its favour; and he desired me to call for an answer at Mr. Vandal's house in three days. I followed his directions, and found the manager, who, being made acquainted with my business, owned that Mr. Marmozet had given him a manuscript play, but denied that he had mentioned Earl Sheerwit's name. When I informed him of the circumstances of the affair, he said he had no engagement with any author; that he would read my tragedy forthwith, and did not believe he should venture to reject it in contradiction to his lordship's opinion, for which he had the utmost veneration, but put it into rehearsal without loss of time. I was so much intoxicated with this encouragement, that I overlooked the mysterious conduct of Mr. Marmozet, and attended the manager at the time appointed, when, to my infinite confusion, he pronounced my play improper for the stage, and

rejected it accordingly. As soon as I could recollect myself from the disorder into which this unexpected refusal had thrown me, I expressed a desire of hearing his objections, which were so groundless, indistinct, and unintelligible, that I persuaded myself he had not at all perused the piece, but had been prompted by somebody, whose lessons he had not rightly retained. However, I have been since informed, that the poor man's head, which was not naturally very clear, had been disordered with superstition, and that he laboured under the tyranny of a wife, and the terrors of hell-fire at the same time.

"Precipitated, in this manner, from the highest pinnacle of hope to the abyss of despondence, I was ready to sink under the burden of my affliction, and, in the bitterness of my anguish, could not help entertaining some doubts of Mr. Marmozet's integrity, when I recollected and compared the circumstances of his conduct towards me. I was encouraged in this suspicion, by being told, that my Lord Sheerwit had spoke of his character with great contempt, and, in particular, resented his insolence in opposing his own taste to that of his lordship concerning my tragedy. While I hesitated between different opinions of the matter, that friend, who, as I told you before, was a little hot-headed, favoured me with a visit, and having heard a circumstantial account of the whole affair, could not contain his indignation, but affirmed, without ceremony, that Marmozet was the sole occasion of my disappointment; that he had acted from first to last with the most perfidious dissimulation, cajoling me with insinuating civilities, while he underhand

employed all his art and influence to prejudice the ignorant manager against my performance; that nothing could equal his hypocrisy but his avarice, which engrossed the faculties of his soul so much, that he scrupled not to be guilty of the meanest practices to gratify that sordid appetite; that in consequence of this disposition, he had prostituted his honour in betraying my inexperience, and in undermining the interest of another author of established reputation, who had also offered a tragedy to the stage, which he thought would interfere with the success of the comedy he had bought, and determined to bring on at all events.

"I was shocked at the description of such a monster, which I could not believe existed in the world, bad as it is, and argued against the asseverations of my friend, by demonstrating the bad policy of such behaviour, which could not fail of entailing infamy upon the author; and the small temptation that a man of Mr. Marmozet's figure and success could have to consult his interest in such a grovelling manner, which must create contempt and abhorrence of him in his patrons, and effectually deprive him of the countenance and protection he now enjoys in such an eminent degree. He pretended to laugh at my simplicity, and asked if I knew for which of his virtues he was so much caressed by the people of fashion. 'It is not,' said he, 'for the qualities of his heart, that this little parasite is invited to the tables of dukes and lords, who hire extraordinary cooks for his entertainment. His avarice they see not, his ingratitude they feel not, his hypocrisy accommodates

itself to their humours, and is of consequence pleasing; but he is chiefly courted for his buffoonery, and will be admitted into the choicest parties of quality for his talent of mimicking Punch and his wife Joan, when a poet of the most exquisite genius is not able to attract the least regard.' God forbid, Mr. Random, that I should credit assertions that degrade the dignity of our superiors so much, and represent that poor man as the most abject of all beings! No! I looked upon them as the hyperboles of passion; and, though that comedy of which he spoke did actually appear, I dare not doubt the innocence of Mr. Marmozet, who, I am told, is as much as ever in favour with the earl: a circumstance that surely could not be, unless he had vindicated his character to the satisfaction of his lordship. Pray forgive this long digression, and give me hearing a little longer; for, thank Heaven! I am now near the goal.

"Baffled in all my attempts, I despaired of seeing my play acted; and bethought myself of choosing some employment, that might afford a sure though mean subsistence; but my landlord, to whom I was by this time considerably indebted, and who had laid his account with having his money paid all in a heap, from the profits of my third night, could not brook his disappointment, therefore made another effort in my behalf, and, by dint of interest, procured a message from a lady of fashion to Mr. Brayer, who had always professed a great veneration for her, desiring that he would set up my play forthwith, and assuring him that she and all her friends would support it in

the performance. To strengthen my interest, she engaged his best actors in my cause; and, in short, exerted herself so much, that it was again received, and my hopes began to revive. But Mr. Brayer, honest man, was so much engrossed by business of vast consequence, though to appearance he had nothing at all to do, that he could not find time to read it until the season was pretty far advanced; and read it he must, for, notwithstanding his having perused it before, his memory did not retain one circumstance of the matter.

"At length he favoured it with his attention, and, having proposed certain alterations, sent his duty to the lady who patronised it, and promised, on his honour, to bring it on next winter, provided these alterations should be made, and the copy delivered to him before the end of April. With an aching heart, I submitted to these conditions, and performed them accordingly. But fortune owed me another unforeseen mortification: Mr. Marmozet, during the summer, became joint patentee with Mr. Brayer; so that, when I claimed performance of articles, I was told, he could do nothing without the consent of his partner, who was pre-engaged to another author.

"My condition was rendered desperate by the death of my good friend and landlord, whose executors obtained a judgment against my effects, which they seized, turned me out into the streets naked, friendless, and forlorn; there I was arrested at the suit of my tailor, and thrown into this prison, where I have made shift to live these five weeks on the

bounty of my fellow-prisoners, who, I hope, are not the worse for the instruction and good offices by which I manifest my gratitude; but, in spite of all their charitable endeavours, my life was scarce tolerable, until your uncommon benevolence enabled me to enjoy it with comfort."

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

I AM SEIZED WITH A DEEP MELANCHOLY, AND BECOME A SLOVEN — AM RELIEVED BY MY UNCLE — HE PREVAILS UPON ME TO ENGAGE WITH HIS OWNERS, AS SURGEON OF THE SHIP WHICH HE COMMANDS — HE MAKES ME A CONSIDERABLE PRESENT — ENTERTAINS STRAP AS HIS STEWARD — I TAKE LEAVE OF MY FRIENDS, AND GO ON BOARD — THE SHIP ARRIVES IN THE DOWNS.

I SHALL not make any reflections on this story, in the course of which the reader must perceive how egregiously the simplicity and milky disposition of this worthy man had been duped and abused by a set of scoundrels, who were so habituated to falsehood and equivocation, that I verily believe they would have found the utmost difficulty in uttering one syllable of truth, though their lives had depended upon their sincerity. Notwithstanding all I had suffered from the knavery and selfishness of mankind, I was amazed and incensed at the base indifference which suffered such uncommon merit as he possessed to languish in obscurity, and struggle with all the miseries of a loathsome jail; and should have blessed the occasion that secluded me from such a perfidious world, had not the remembrance of the amiable Narcissa preserved my attachment to that society of which she constituted a part.

The picture of that lovely creature was the constant companion of my solitude. How often did I contemplate the resemblance of those enchanting features that first captivated my heart! How often did I weep over those endearing scenes which her image recalled! and how often did I curse my perfidious fate for having robbed me of the fair original! In vain did my imagination flatter me with schemes of future happiness; surly reason always interposed, and, in a moment, overthrew that unsubstantial fabric, by chastising the extravagance of my hope, and representing my unhappy situation in the right point of view.

In vain did I fly for refuge to the amusements of the place, and engage in the parties of Jackson, at cards, billiards, ninepins, and fives; a train of melancholy thoughts took possession of my soul, which even the conversation of Melopoyn could not divert. I ordered Strap to inquire every day at Banter's lodgings, in expectation of hearing again from my charmer; and my disappointment considerably augmented my chagrin. My affectionate valet was infected with my sorrow, and often sat with me whole hours without speaking, uttering sigh for sigh, and shedding tear for tear. This fellowship increased our distemper; he became incapable of business, and was discarded by his master; while I, seeing my money melt away, without any certainty of deliverance, and, in short, all my hopes frustrated, grew negligent of life, lost all appetite, and degenerated into such a sloven, that during the space of two months, I was neither washed, shifted, nor shaved; so that my face,

rendered meagre with abstinence, was obscured with dirt, and overshadowed with hair, and my whole appearance squalid and even frightful; when, one day, Strap brought me notice, that there was a man below who wanted to speak with me. Roused at this intelligence, and in full hopes of receiving a letter from the dear object of my love, I ran downstairs with the utmost precipitation, and found, to my infinite surprise, my generous uncle Mr. Bowling. Transported at the sight, I sprung forward to embrace him. Upon which he started aside with great agility, drew his hanger, and put himself upon his guard, saying, "Avast, brother, avast! sheer off! — Yoho! you turnkey, why don't you keep a better look-out? here's one of your crazy prisoners broke from his lashings, I do suppose." I could not help laughing heartily at his mistake; but this I soon rectified by my voice, which he instantly recollected, and shook me by the hand with great affection, testifying his concern at seeing me in such a miserable condition.

I conducted him to my apartment, where, in presence of Strap, whom I introduced to him as one of my best friends, he gave me to understand, that he was just arrived from the coast of Guinea, after having made a pretty successful voyage, in which he acted as mate, until the ship was attacked by a French privateer; that the captain being killed during the engagement, he had taken the command, and was so fortunate as to sink the enemy; after which exploit he fell in with a merchant ship from Martinico, laden with sugar, indigo, and some silver; and, by virtue

of his letter of marque, attacked, took, and brought her safe into Kinsale, in Ireland, where she was condemned as a lawful prize; by which means he had not only got a pretty sum of money, but also acquired the favour of his owners, who had already conferred upon him the command of a large ship, mounted with twenty nine-pounders, ready to sail upon a very advantageous voyage, which he was not at liberty to discover. And he assured me, that it was with the greatest difficulty that he had found me, in consequence of a direction left for him at his lodgings at Wapping.

I was rejoiced beyond measure at this account of his good fortune; and, at his desire, recounted all the adventures that had happened to me since we parted. When he understood the particulars of Strap's attachment to me, he squeezed his hand very cordially, and promised to make a man of him; then giving me ten guineas for my present occasion, took a direction for the tailor who arrested me, and went away in order to discharge the debt, telling me at parting, that he would soon fetch up all my leeway with a wet sail.

I was utterly confounded at this sudden transition, which affected me more than any reverse I had formerly felt; and a crowd of incoherent ideas rushed so impetuously upon my imagination, that my reason could neither separate nor connect them, when Strap, whose joy had manifested itself in a thousand fooleries, came into my room with his shaving utensils, and, without any previous intimation, began to lather my beard, whistling with great emotion all the

while. I started from my reverie, and being too well acquainted with Strap, to trust myself in his hands while he was under such agitation, desired to be excused, sent for another barber, and suffered myself to be trimmed. Having performed the ceremony of ablution, I shifted, and dressing in my gayest apparel, waited for the return of my uncle, who was agreeably surprised at my sudden transformation.

This beneficent kinsman had satisfied my creditor, and obtained an order for my discharge, so that I was no longer a prisoner; but as I had some reluctance to part with my friends and fellows in distress, I prevailed upon Mr. Bowling to favour us with his company, and invited Mr. Melopoyn and Jackson to spend the evening at my apartment, where I regaled them with a supper, good wine, and the news of my release, on which they heartily congratulated me, notwithstanding the loss of my company, which, they were pleased to say, they should severely feel. As for Jackson, his misfortune made so little impression on himself, and he was altogether so loose, indifferent, and indiscreet, that I could scarce pity his situation. But I had conceived a veneration and friendship for the poet, who was, in all respects, an object much more worthy of compassion and regard. When our guests withdrew, and my uncle had retired, with an intention to visit me next morning, I made up a bundle of some linen, and other necessaries, and, bidding Strap carry them to Mr. Melopoyn's lodging, went thither myself, and pressed it upon his acceptance, with five guineas, which, with much difficulty, he received, assuring me, at the same time, that he

should never have it in his power to make satisfaction. I then asked if I could serve him any other way? To which he answered, "You already have done too much;" and unable to contain the emotions of his soul any longer, burst into tears and wept aloud. Moved at this spectacle, I left him to his repose; and when my uncle returned in the morning, represented his character in such a favourable light, that the honest seaman was affected with his distress, and determined to follow my example, in presenting him with five pieces more. Upon which, that I might save him some confusion, I advised Mr. Bowling to enclose it in a letter to be delivered by Strap after we should be gone.

This was accordingly done. I took a formal leave of all my acquaintance in the jail; and just as I was about to step into an hackney-coach at the gate, Jackson calling me, I returned, and he asked me in a whisper, if I could lend him a shilling? His demand being so moderate, and in all likelihood the last he would make upon me, I slipped a guinea into his hand, which he no sooner perceived, than he cried, "O Jesus! a guinea!" then laying hold of a button of my coat, broke out into an immoderate fit of laughter; and when his convulsion was ended, told me, I was an honest fellow, and let me go. The coachman was ordered to drive to Mr. Bowling's lodgings, where, when we arrived, he entered into a serious discourse with me on the subject of my situation, and proposed that I should sail with him in quality of his surgeon; in which case he would put me in a method of getting a fortune in a few years by

my own industry; and assured me, that I might expect to inherit all that he should die possessed of, provided I should survive him. Though I was penetrated with a sense of his generosity, I was startled at a proposal that offered violence to my love, and signified my sentiments on that head, which he did not seem to relish, but observed, that love was the fruit of idleness; that, when once I should be employed in business, and my mind engaged in making money, I should be no more troubled with these silly notions, which none but your fair-weather Jacks, who have nothing but their pleasure to mind, ought to entertain. I was piqued at this insinuation, which I looked upon as a reproach, and, without giving myself time to deliberate, accepted his offer. He was overjoyed at my compliance, carried me immediately to his chief owner, with whom a bargain was struck; so that then I could not retract with honour, had I been ever so much averse to the agreement. That I might not have time to cool, he bade me draw out a list of medicines for a complement of five hundred men, adapted to the distempers of hot climates, and sufficient for a voyage of eighteen months, and carry it to a certain wholesale apothecary, who would also provide me in two well-qualified mates. While I was thus employed, Strap came in, and looked very blank, when he understood my resolution. However, after a pause of some minutes, he insisted upon going along with me; and at my desire was made ship's steward by Captain Bowling, who promised to be at the expense of fitting him out, and to lend him two hundred pounds to purchase an adventure.

A CONSIDERABLE PRESENT

When I had delivered my list of medicines, chosen a couple of my own countrymen for mates, and bespoke a set of chirurgical instruments, my uncle told me, that, by his last voyage, he had cleared almost three thousand pounds, one-third of which he would immediately make over and put into my hands; that he would procure for me credit to the value of so much more, in such goods as would turn to best account in the country to which we were bound; and that, although he looked upon my interest as his own, he would keep the remaining part of his fortune in his own disposal, with a view of preserving his independence, and a power of punishing me, in case I should not make a good use of what he had already bestowed.

Without troubling the reader with an account of the effect which this surprising generosity had upon my mind, I shall only say, that his promises were instantly performed, and an invoice of merchandise proper for the voyage presented to me, that I might purchase the goods, and ship them with all expedition. In the midst of this hurry, the remembrance of my charming Narcissa often interposed, and made me the most miserable of all mortals. I was distracted with the thought of being torn from her, perhaps for ever; and though the hope of seeing her again might have supported me under the torments of separation, I could not reflect upon the anguish she must feel at parting with me, and the incessant sorrows to which her tender bosom would be exposed during my absence, without being pierced with the deepest affliction. As my imagination was daily and

nightly upon the rack to invent some method of mitigating this cruel stroke, or at least of acquitting my love and honour in the opinion of this gentle creature, I at length stumbled upon an expedient, with which the reader will be made acquainted in due time; and, in consequence of my determination, became less uneasy and disturbed.

My business being finished, and the ship ready to sail, I resolved to make my last appearance among my acquaintance at the other end of the town, where I had not been since my imprisonment; and as I had, by the advice of my uncle, taken off some very rich clothes for sale, I put on the gayest suit in my possession, and went in a chair to the coffee-house I used to frequent, where I found my friend Banter so confounded at the magnificence of my dress, that, when I made up to him, he gazed at me with a look of astonishment, without being able, for some minutes, to open his lips; then pulling me aside by the sleeve, and fixing his eyes on mine, accosted me in this manner: "Random, where the devil have you been? eh! — What is the meaning of all this finery? — Oho! I understand you. — You are just arrived from the country! what! the roads are good, eh! — Well, Random, you are a bold fellow, and a lucky fellow! — but take care, the pitcher goes often to the well, but is broke at last." So saying, he pointed to his collar; by which gesture, and the broken hints he had ejaculated, I found he suspected me of having robbed on the highway; and I laughed very heartily at his supposition. Without explaining myself any further, I told him he was mistaken in his conjecture;

that I had been for some time past with the relation of whom he had frequently heard me speak; and that, as I should set out next day upon my travels, I had come to take my leave of my friends, and to receive of him the money he had borrowed from me, which, now that I was going abroad, I should certainly have occasion for.

He was a little disconcerted at this demand; but, recollecting himself in a moment, swore in an affected passion, that I had used him extremely ill, and he would never forgive me, for having, by this short warning, put it out of his power to free himself of an obligation he could no longer bear. I could not help smiling at this pretended delicacy, which I commended highly, telling him he needed not to be uneasy on that score, for I would give him a direction to a merchant in the city, with whom I would leave a discharge for the sum, to be delivered upon payment. He professed much joy at this expedient, and with great eagerness asked the person's name and place of abode, which he forthwith wrote in his pocket-book, assuring me, that he should not be long in my debt. This affair, which I knew he would never after think of, being settled to his satisfaction, I sent cards to all my friends, desiring the favour of their company at the tavern in the evening, when they honoured my invitation, and I had the pleasure of treating them in a very elegant manner, at which they expressed equal admiration as applause. Having enjoyed ourselves till midnight, I took my leave of them, and was well-nigh stifled with caresses. Next day I set out with Strap, in a post-chaise for Gravesend, where we went on board, and,

the wind serving, weighed anchor in less than twelve hours. Without meeting with any accident, we reached the Downs, where we were obliged to come to an anchor, and wait for an easterly wind to carry us out of the Channel.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

I SET OUT FOR SUSSEX — CONSULT MRS. SAGELY — ACHIEVE AN INTERVIEW WITH NARCISSA — RETURN TO THE SHIP — WE GET CLEAR OF THE CHANNEL — I LEARN OUR DESTINATION — WE ARE CHASED BY A LARGE SHIP — THE COMPANY ARE DISMAYED, AND ENCOURAGED BY THE CAPTAIN'S SPEECH — OUR PURSUER HAPPENS TO BE AN ENGLISH MAN-OF-WAR — WE ARRIVE AT THE COAST OF GUINEA, PURCHASE 400 NEGROES, SAIL FOR PARAGUAY, GET SAFE INTO THE RIVER OF PLATE, AND SELL OUR CARGO TO GREAT ADVANTAGE.

IT was now I put in execution the scheme I had projected at London; and asking leave of the captain for Strap and me to stay on shore till the wind should become favourable, my request was granted, because he had orders to remain in the Downs until he should receive some despatches from London, which he did not expect in less than a week. Having imparted my resolution to my trusty valet, who (though he endeavoured to dissuade me from such a rash undertaking) would not quit me in the enterprise, I hired horses, and set out immediately for that part of Sussex where my charmer was confined, which was not above thirty miles distant from Deal, where we mounted. As I was perfectly well acquainted with the extent of the squire's estate and influence, I

halted within five miles of his house, where we remained till the twilight, at which time we set forward, and, by the favour of a dark night, reached a copse about half a mile from the village where Mrs. Sagely lived. Here we left our horses tied to a tree, and went directly to the house of my old benefactress, Strap trembling all the way, and venting ejaculatory petitions to Heaven for our safety. Her habitation being quite solitary, we arrived at the door without being observed, when I ordered my companion to enter by himself, and, in case there should be company with her, deliver a letter which I had writ for that purpose, and say that a friend of hers in London, understanding that he intended to travel this road, had committed it to his care. He rapped at the door, to which the good old matron coming, told him, that being a lone woman, he must excuse her if she did not open it until he had declared his name and business. He answered, that his name was unknown to her, and that his business was to deliver a letter, which, to free her from all manner of apprehension, he would convey to her through the space between the door and the threshold. This he instantly performed; and she no sooner read the contents, which specified my being present, than she cried, "If the person who wrote this letter be at hand, let him speak, that I may be assured by his voice whether or not I may safely admit him." I forthwith applied my mouth to the keyhole, and pronounced, "Dear mother, you need not be afraid; it is I, so much indebted to your goodness, who now crave admittance." She knew my voice, and, opening the door

immediately, received me with a truly maternal affection, manifesting, by the tears she let fall, her concern lest I should be discovered, for she had been informed of everything that had happened between Narcissa and me, from the dear captive's own mouth.

When I explained the motive of my journey, which was no other than a desire of seeing the object of my love before I should quit the kingdom, that I might in person convince her of the necessity I was under to leave her, reconcile her to that event, by describing the advantages that in all probability would attend it, repeat my vows of eternal constancy, and enjoy the melancholy pleasure of a tender embrace at parting; I say, when I had thus signified my intention, Mrs. Sagely told me, that Narcissa, upon her return from Bath, had been so strictly watched, that nobody but one or two of the servants, devoted to her brother, was admitted to her presence; that afterwards she had been a little enlarged, and was permitted to see company, during which indulgence she had been several times at her cottage; but of late she had been betrayed by one of the servants, who discovered to the squire, that he had once carried a letter from her to the post-house, directed to me; upon which information she was now more confined than ever, and that I could have no chance of seeing her, unless I would run the risk of getting into the garden, where she and her maid were every day allowed to take the air, and lie hid until I should have an opportunity of speaking to them — an adventure attended with such danger, that no man in his right wits would attempt it. This enterprise, hazardous as it was, I

resolved to perform, in spite of all the arguments of Mrs. Sagely, who reasoned, chid, and entreated by turns, and the tears and prayers of Strap, who conjured me, on his knees, to have more regard to myself, as well as to him, than to attempt my own destruction in such a precipitate manner. I was deaf to everything but the suggestions of my love; and ordering him to return immediately with the horses to the inn from whence we set out, and wait for my coming in that place, he at first peremptorily refused to leave me, until I persuaded him, that, if our horses should remain where they were till daylight, they would certainly be discovered, and the whole county alarmed. On this consideration, he took his leave in a sorrowful plight, kissed my hand, and, weeping, cried, "God knows if ever I shall see you again."—My kind landlady, finding me obstinate, gave me her best advice how to behave in the execution of my project; and, after having persuaded me to take a little refreshment, accommodated me with a bed, and left me to my repose.

Early in the morning, I arose, and armed with a couple of loaded pistols and a hanger, went to the back of the squire's garden, climbed over the wall, and, according to Mrs. Sagely's direction, concealed myself in a thicket, hard by an alcove that terminated a walk at a good distance from the house, which (I was told) my mistress chiefly frequented. Here I absconded from five o'clock in the morning to six in the evening, without seeing a human creature; at last I perceived two women approaching, whom, by my throbbing heart, I soon recognised to be the adorable

Narcissa and Miss Williams. I felt the strongest agitation of soul at the sight: and guessing that they would repose themselves in the alcove, stepped into it unperceived, and laid upon the stone table a picture of myself in miniature, for which I had sat in London, purposing to leave it with Narcissa before I should go abroad. I exposed it in this manner, as an introduction to my own appearance, which, without some previous intimation, I was afraid might have an unlucky effect upon the delicate nerves of my fair enslaver; and then withdrew into the thicket, where I could hear their discourse, and suit myself to the circumstances of the occasion. As they advanced, I observed an air of melancholy in the countenance of Narcissa, blended with such unspeakable sweetness, that I could scarce refrain from flying into her arms, and kissing away the pearly drop that stood collected in each bewitching eye.

According to my expectation, she entered the alcove, and perceiving something on the table, took it up. No sooner did she cast her eye upon the features, than, startled at the resemblance, she cried, "Good God!" and the roses instantly vanished from her cheeks. Her confidant, alarmed at this exclamation, looked at the picture, and, struck with the likeness, exclaimed, "O Jesus! the very features of Mr. Random!" Narcissa having recollected herself a little, said, "Whatever angel brought it hither as a comfort to me in my affliction, I am thankful for the benefit, and will preserve it as the dearest object of my care." So saying, she kissed it with surprising ardour, shed a flood of tears, and then deposited the

lifeless image in her lovely bosom. Transported at these symptoms of her unaltered affection, I was about to throw myself at her feet, when Miss Williams, whose reflection was less engaged than that of her mistress, observed, that the picture could not transport itself hither, and that she could not help thinking I was not far off. The gentle Narcissa, startling at this conjecture, answered, "Heaven forbid! for, although nothing in the universe could yield me satisfaction equal to that of his presence for one poor moment, in a proper place, I would rather forfeit his company — almost for ever, than see him here, where his life would be exposed to so much danger." I could no longer restrain the impulse of my passion, but, breaking from my concealment, stood before her, when she uttered a fearful shriek, and fainted in the arms of her companion. I flew towards the treasure of my soul, clasped her in my embrace, and, with the warmth of my kisses brought her again to life. O! that I were endowed with the expression of a Raphael, the graces of a Guido, the magic touches of a Titian, that I might represent the fond concern, the chastened rapture, and ingenuous blush, that mingled in her beauteous face when she opened her eyes upon me, and pronounced, "O heavens! is it you?"

I am afraid I have already encroached upon the reader's patience, with the particulars of this amour, on which, I own, I cannot help being impertinently circumstantial. I shall therefore omit the less material passages of this interview, during which I convinced her reason, though I could not appease the

sad presages of her love, with regard to the long voyage and dangers I must undergo. When we had spent an hour (which was all she could spare from the barbarity of her brother's vigilance) in lamenting over our hard fate, and in repeating our reciprocal vows, Miss Williams reminded us of the necessity there was for our immediate parting; and sure, lovers never parted with such sorrow and reluctance as we. But because my words are incapable of doing justice to this affecting circumstance, I am obliged to draw a veil over it, and observe, that I returned in the dark to the house of Mrs. Sagely, who was overjoyed to hear of my success, and opposed the tumults of my grief with such strength of reason, that my mind regained in some measure its tranquillity; and that very night, after having forced upon the good gentlewoman a purse of twenty guineas, as a token of my gratitude and esteem, I took my leave of her, and set out on foot for the inn, where my arrival freed honest Strap from the horrors of unutterable dread.

We took horse immediately, and alighted early next morning at Deal, where I found my uncle in great concern on account of my absence, because he had received his despatches, and must have weighed with the first fair wind, whether I had been on board or not. Next day, a brisk easterly gale springing up, we set sail, and in eight-and-forty hours got clear of the Channel.

When we were about two hundred leagues to westward of the Land's End, the captain taking me apart into the cabin, told me, that, now he was per-

mitted by his instructions, he would disclose the intent and destination of our voyage: "The ship," said he, "which has been fitted out at a great expense, is bound for the coast of Guinea, where we shall exchange part of our cargo for slaves and gold dust; from thence we will transport our negroes to Buenos-Ayres in New Spain, where, by virtue of passports obtained from our own court, and that of Madrid, we will dispose of them and the goods that remain on board for silver, by means of our supercargo, who is perfectly well acquainted with the coast, the lingo, and inhabitants." Being thus let into the secret of our expedition, I borrowed of the supercargo a Spanish grammar, dictionary, and some other books of the same language, which I studied with such application, that, before we arrived in New Spain, I could maintain a conversation with him in that tongue. Being arrived in the warm latitudes, I ordered, with the captain's consent, the whole ship's company to be blooded and purged, myself undergoing the same evacuation, in order to prevent those dangerous fevers to which northern constitutions are subject in hot climates; and I have reason to believe that this precaution was not unserviceable, for we lost but one sailor during our whole passage to the coast.

One day, when we had been about five weeks at sea, we descried to windward a large ship bearing down upon us with all the sail she could carry. Upon which my uncle ordered the studding-sails to be hoisted, and the ship to be cleared for engaging; but finding that, to use the seaman's phrase, we were

very much wronged by the ship which had us in chase, and which by this time had hoisted French colours, he commanded the studding-sails to be taken in, the courses to be clewed up, the maintop sail to be backed, the tompions to be taken out of the guns, and every man to repair to his quarters. While everybody was busied in the performance of these orders, Strap came upon the quarter-deck, trembling, and looking aghast, and, with a voice half suppressed by fear, asked if I thought we were a match for the vessel in pursuit of us? Observing his consternation, I said, "What! are you afraid, Strap?" "Afraid!" he replied, "n-n-no; what should I be afraid of? I thank God, I have a clear conscience; but I believe it will be a bloody battle, and I wish you may not have occasion for another hand to assist you in the cockpit." I immediately perceived his drift, and making the captain acquainted with his situation, desired he might be stationed below with me and my mates. My uncle, incensed at his pusillanimity, bade me send him down instantly, that his fear might not infect the ship's company; whereupon I told the poor steward, that I had begged him for my assistant, and desired him to go down and help my mates to get ready the instruments and dressings. Notwithstanding the satisfaction he must have felt at these tidings, he affected a shyness of quitting the upper deck; and said, he hoped I did not imagine he was afraid to do his duty above board; for he believed himself as well prepared for death as any man in the ship, no disparagement to me or the captain. I was disgusted at this affectation, and,

in order to punish his hypocrisy, assured him, he might take his choice either of going down to the cockpit with me, or of staying upon deck during the engagement. Alarmed at this indifference, he replied, "Well, to oblige you, I'll go down; but, remember, it is more for your sake than my own." So saying, he disappeared in a twinkling, without waiting for an answer.

By this time we could observe two tier of guns in the ship which pursued us, and which was now but two short miles astern. This discovery had an evident effect upon the sailors, who did not scruple to say, that we should be torn to pieces, and blown out of the water, and that, if in case any of them should lose their precious limbs, they must go a-begging for life, for there was no provision made by the merchants for those poor souls who were maimed in their service. The captain, understanding this backwardness, ordered the crew abaft, and spoke to them thus: "My lads, I am told you hang an a—se. I have gone to sea thirty years man and boy, and never saw English sailors afraid before. Mayhap you think I want to expose you for the lucre of gain. Whosoever thinks so, thinks a d—ned lie, for my whole cargo is insured; so that, in case I should be taken, my loss would not be great. The enemy is stronger than we, to be sure. What then? have we not a chance for carrying away one of her masts, and so get clear of her? If we find her too hard for us, 't is but striking at last. If any man is hurt in the engagement, I promise on the word of an honest seaman, to make him a recompense according to his loss. So now, you

that are lazy, lubberly, cowardly dogs, get away, and skulk in the hold and bread room ; and you that are jolly boys, stand by me, and let us give one broadside for the honour of Old England."

This eloquent harangue was so well adapted to the disposition of his hearers, that one and all of them, pulling off their hats, waved them over their heads, and saluted him with three cheers ; upon which he sent his boy for two large case bottles of brandy, and having treated every man with a dram, they repaired to their quarters, and waited impatiently for the word of command. I must do my uncle the justice to say, that, in the whole of his disposition, he behaved with the utmost intrepidity, conduct, and deliberation. The enemy being very near, he ordered me to my station, and was just going to give the word for hoisting the colours, and firing, when the supposed Frenchman hauled down his white pennant, jack, and ensign, hoisted English ones, and fired a gun ahead of us. This was a joyful event to Captain Bowling, who immediately showed his colours, and fired a gun to leeward. Upon which the other ship ran alongside of us, hailed him, and giving him to know that she was an English man-of-war of forty guns, ordered him to hoist out his boat and come on board. This command he obeyed with the more alacrity, because, upon inquiry, he found that she was commanded by an old messmate of his, who was overjoyed to see him, detained him to dinner, and sent his barge for the supercargo and me, who were very much caressed on his account. As this commander was destined to cruise upon the French, in the latitude of Martinico,

his stem and quarters were adorned with white fleur-de-lis, and the whole shell of the ship so much disguised for a decoy to the enemy, that it was no wonder my uncle did not know her, although he had sailed on board of her many years. We kept company with her four days, during which time the captains were never asunder, and then parted, our course lying different from hers.

In less than a fortnight after our separation, we made the land of Guinea, near the mouth of the river Gambia, and trading along the coast as far to the southward of the line as Angola and Bengula, in less than six months disposed of the greatest part of our cargo, and purchased four hundred negroes, my adventure having been laid out in gold dust.

Our complement being made up, we took our departure from Cape Negro, and arrived in the Rio de la Plata in six weeks, having met with nothing remarkable in our voyage, except an epidemic fever, not unlike the jail distemper, which broke out among our slaves, and carried off a good many of the ship's company; among whom I lost one of my mates, and poor Strap had well-nigh given up the ghost. Having produced our passport to the Spanish governor, we were received with great courtesy, sold our slaves in a very few days, and could have put off five times the number at our own price; though we were obliged to smuggle the rest of our merchandise, consisting of European bale goods, which, however, we made shift to dispose of at a great advantage.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

I AM INVITED TO THE VILLA OF A SPANISH DON, WHERE WE MEET WITH AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN, AND MAKE A VERY INTERESTING DISCOVERY — WE LEAVE BUENOS-AYRES, AND ARRIVE AT JAMAICA.

OUR ship being freed from the disagreeable lading of negroes, to whom, indeed, I had been a miserable slave since our leaving the coast of Guinea, I began to enjoy myself, and breathe with pleasure the pure air of Paraguay, this part of which is reckoned the Montpelier of South America, and has obtained, on account of its climate, the name of Buenos-Ayres. It was in this delicious place that I gave myself entirely up to the thoughts of my dear Narcissa, whose image still kept possession of my breast, and whose charms, enhanced by absence, appeared to my imagination, if possible, more engaging than ever! I calculated the profits of my voyage, which even exceeded my expectation; resolved to purchase a handsome sinecure upon my arrival in England, and, if I should find the squire as averse to me as ever, marry his sister by stealth; and, in case our family should increase, rely upon the generosity of my uncle, who was by this time worth a considerable sum.

While I amused myself with these agreeable projects, and the transporting hopes of enjoying Narcissa, we were very much caressed by the Spanish gentlemen, who frequently formed parties of pleasure for our entertainment, in which we made excursions a good way into the country. Among those who signalised themselves by their civility to us, there was one Don Antonio de Ribera, a very polite young gentleman, with whom I had contracted an intimate friendship, who invited us one day to his country house, and, as a further inducement to our compliance, promised to procure for us the company of an English signior, who had been settled in those parts many years, and acquired the love and esteem of the whole province, by his affability, good sense, and honourable behaviour.

We accepted his invitation, and set out for his villa, where we had not been longer than an hour, when the person arrived in whose favour I had been so much prepossessed. He was a tall man, remarkably well shaped, of a fine mien and appearance, commanding respect, and seemed to be turned of forty; the features of his face were saddened with a reserve and gravity, which in other countries would have been thought the effect of melancholy; but here appeared to have been contracted by his commerce with the Spaniards, who are remarkable for that severity of countenance. Understanding from Don Antonio that we were his countrymen, he saluted us all round very complaisantly, and fixing his eyes very attentively on me, uttered a deep sigh. I had been struck with a profound veneration for him at his

first coming into the room; and no sooner observed this expression of his sorrow, directed, as it were, in a particular manner to me, than my heart took part in his grief. I sympathised involuntarily, and sighed in my turn. Having asked leave of our entertainer, he accosted us in English, professed his satisfaction at seeing so many of his countrymen in such a remote place, and asked the captain, who went by the name of Signior Thoma, from what part of Britain he had sailed, and whither he was bound. My uncle told him that we had sailed from the river Thames, and were bound for the same place, by the way of Jamaica, where we intended to take in a lading of sugar.

Having satisfied himself in these and other particulars about the state of the war, he gave us to understand that he had a longing desire to revisit his native country, in consequence of which he had already transmitted to Europe the greatest part of his fortune in neutral bottoms, and would willingly embark the rest of it with himself, in our ship, provided the captain had no objection to such a passenger. My uncle very prudently replied, that for his part he should be glad of his company, if he could procure the consent of the governor, without which he durst not admit him on board, whatever inclination he had to oblige him. The gentleman approved of his discretion, and, telling him that there would be no difficulty in obtaining the connivance of the governor, who was his good friend, shifted the conversation to another subject.

I was overjoyed to hear his intention, and already

interested myself so much in his favour, that, had he been disappointed, I should have been very unhappy. In the course of our entertainment, he eyed me with uncommon attachment; I felt a surprising attraction towards him; when he spoke, I listened with attention and reverence; the dignity of his deportment filled me with affection and awe; and, in short, the emotions of my soul, in presence of this stranger, were strong and unaccountable!

Having spent the best part of the day with us, he took his leave, telling Captain Thoma, that he should hear from him in a short time. He was no sooner gone, than I asked a thousand questions about him of Don Antonio, who could give me no other satisfaction, than that his name was Don Rodrigo, that he had lived fifteen or sixteen years in these parts, was reputed rich, and supposed to have been unfortunate in his younger years, because he was observed to nourish a pensive melancholy, even from the time of his first settlement among them; but that nobody had ventured to inquire into the cause of his sorrow, in consideration of his peace, which might suffer in the recapitulation of his misfortunes.

I was seized with an irresistible desire of knowing the particulars of his fate, and enjoyed not one hour of repose during the whole night, by reason of the eager conceptions that inspired me with regard to his story, which I resolved, if possible, to learn. Next morning, while we were at breakfast, three mules richly caparisoned arrived with a message from Don Rodrigo, desiring our company, and that of Don Antonio, at his house, which was situated about ten

miles farther up in the country. I was pleased with this invitation, in consequence of which we mounted the mules which he had provided for us, and alighted at his house before noon. Here we were splendidly entertained by the generous stranger, who still seemed to show a particular regard for me, and, after dinner, made me a present of a ring set with a beautiful amethyst, the production of that country, saying, at the same time, that he was once blessed with a son, who, had he lived, would have been nearly of my age. This observation, delivered with a profound sigh, made my heart throb with violence; a crowd of confused ideas rushed upon my imagination, which while I endeavoured to unravel, my uncle perceived my absence of thought, and tapping me on the shoulder, said, "Oons! are you asleep, Rory!"

Before I had time to reply, Don Rodrigo, with uncommon eagerness of voice and look, pronounced, "Pray, captain, what is the young gentleman's name?" — "His name," said my uncle, "is Roderick Random." "Gracious Powers!" cried the stranger, starting up, — "and his mother's?" — "His mother," answered the captain, amazed, "was called Charlotte Bowling." "O bounteous Heaven!" exclaimed Don Rodrigo, springing across the table, and clasping me in his arms, "my son! my son! have I found thee again? — do I hold thee in my embrace, after having lost and despaired of seeing thee so long?" So saying, he fell upon my neck and wept aloud with joy; while the power of nature operating strongly in my breast, I was lost in rapture, and while he pressed me to his heart, let fall a shower of tears into his

bosom. His utterance was choked up a good while by the agitation of his soul. At length he broke out into, "Mysterious Providence! — O my dear Charlotte! there yet remains a pledge of our love; and such a pledge! — so found! — O Infinite Goodness; let me adore thy all-wise decrees!" Having thus expressed himself, he kneeled upon the floor, lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, and remained some minutes in a silent ecstasy of devotion. I put myself in the same posture, adored the All-good Disposer in a prayer of mental thanksgiving; and when his ejaculation was ended, did homage to my father, and craved his parental blessing. He hugged me again with unutterable fondness, and having implored the protection of Heaven upon my head, raised me from the ground, and presented me as his son to the company, who wept in concert over this affecting scene. Among the rest, my uncle did not fail to discover the goodness and joy of his heart. *Albeit unused to the melting mood*, he blubbered with great tenderness, and, wringing my father's hand, cried, "Brother Random, I'm rejoiced to see you — God be praised for this happy meeting." Don Rodrigo, understanding that he was his brother-in-law, embraced him affectionately, saying, "Are you my Charlotte's brother? — Alas! unhappy Charlotte! but why should I repine? we shall meet again never more to part! — Brother, you are truly welcome. — Dear son, I am transported with unspeakable joy! — This day is a jubilee — my friends and servants shall share my satisfaction."

While he despatched messengers to the gentlemen

in the neighbourhood, to announce this event, and gave orders for a grand entertainment, I was so much affected with the tumults of passion which assailed me on this great, sudden, and unexpected occasion, that I fell sick, fevered, and in less than three hours became quite delirious; so that the preparations were countermanded, and the joy of the family converted into grief and despair. Physicians were instantly called; I was plentifully blooded in the foot, my lower extremities were bathed in a decoction of salutiferous herbs; in ten hours after I was taken ill I enjoyed a critical sweat, and next day felt no remains of the distemper, but an agreeable lassitude, which did not hinder me from getting up. During the progress of this fever, which from the term of its duration is called *ephemera*, my father never once quitted my bedside, but administered the prescriptions of the physicians with the most pious care; while Captain Bowling manifested his concern by the like attendance. I no sooner found myself delivered from the disease, than I bethought myself of my honest friend, Strap; and resolving to make him happy forthwith in the knowledge of my good fortune, told my father in general, that I had been infinitely obliged to this faithful adherent, and begged he would indulge me so far as to send for him, without letting him know my happiness, until he could receive an account of it from my own mouth.

My request was instantly complied with, and a messenger with a spare mule detached to the ship, carrying orders from the captain to the mate to send the steward by the bearer. My health being,

in the meantime, re-established, and my mind composed, I began to relish this important turn of my fortune, in reflecting upon the advantages with which it must be attended; and as the idea of my lovely Narcissa always joined itself to every scene of happiness I could imagine, I entertained myself now with the prospect of possessing her in that distinguished sphere to which she was entitled by her birth and qualifications. Having often mentioned her name while I was deprived of my senses, my father guessed that there was an intimate connexion between us, and, discovering the picture which hung in my bosom by a ribbon, did not doubt that it was the resemblance of my amiable mistress. In this belief he was confirmed by my uncle, who told him that it was the picture of a young woman, to whom I was under promise of marriage. Alarmed at this piece of information, Don Rodrigo took the first opportunity of questioning me about the particulars of this affair, which when I had candidly recounted, he approved of my passion, and promised to contribute all in his power towards its success. Though I never doubted his generosity, I was transported on this occasion, and throwing myself at his feet, told him, he had now completed my happiness; for, without the possession of Narcissa, I should be miserable among all the pleasures of life. He raised me with a smile of paternal fondness; said, that he knew what it was to be in love; and observed, that if he had been as tenderly beloved by his father as I was by mine, he should not now perhaps have cause — here he was interrupted by a sigh, the

tear rushed into his eye, he suppressed the dictates of his grief, and the time being opportune, desired me to relate the passages of my life, which my uncle had told him were manifold and surprising. I recounted the most material circumstances of my fortune, to which he listened with wonder and attention, manifesting from time to time those different emotions which my different situations may be supposed to have raised in a parent's breast, and, when my detail was ended, blessed God for the adversity I had undergone, which, he said, enlarged the understanding, improved the heart, steeled the constitution, and qualified a young man for all the duties and enjoyments of life, much better than any education which affluence could bestow.

When I had thus satisfied his curiosity, I discovered an inclination to hear the particulars of his story, which he gratified, by beginning with his marriage, and proceeded to the day of his disappearing, as I have related in the first part of my memoirs. "Careless of life," continued he, "and unable to live in a place where every object recalled the memory of my dear Charlotte, whom I had lost through the barbarity of an unnatural parent, I took my leave of you, my child, then an infant, with a heart full of unutterable woe, but little suspecting that my father's unkindness would have descended to my innocent orphan; and, setting out alone at midnight for the nearest seaport, early next morning got on board a ship, bound as I had heard for France, and bargaining with the master for my passage, bade a long adieu to my native country,

and put to sea with the first fair wind. The place of our destination was Granville; but we had the misfortune to run upon a ridge of rocks near the Island of Alderney, called the Caskets, where the sea running high, the ship went to pieces, the boat sunk alongside, and every soul on board perished, except myself, who, by the assistance of a grating, got ashore on the coast of Normandy. I went directly to Caen, where I was so lucky as to meet with a count, whom I had formerly known in my travels. With this gentleman I set out for Paris, where I was recommended by him and other friends as a tutor to a young nobleman, whom I accompanied to the court of Spain.

There we remained a whole year, at the end of which my pupil being recalled by his father, I quitted my office, and staid behind, by the advice of a certain Spanish grandee, who took me into his protection, and introduced me to another nobleman, who was afterwards created viceroy of Peru. He insisted on my attending him to his government in the Indies, where, however, by reason of my religion, it was not in his power to make my fortune any other way than by encouraging me to trade, which I had not long prosecuted, when my patron died, and I found myself in the midst of strangers, without one friend to support or protect me. Urged by this consideration, I sold my effects, and removed to this country, the governor of which, having been appointed by the viceroy, was my intimate acquaintance. Here has Heaven prospered my endeavours, during a residence of sixteen years, in which my

tranquillity was never invaded, but by the remembrance of your mother, whose death I have in secret mourned without ceasing, and the reflection of you, whose fate I could never learn, notwithstanding all my inquiries, by means of my friends in France, who, after the most strict examination, could give me no other account, than that you went abroad six years ago, and was never after heard of. I could not rest satisfied with this imperfect information, and though my hope of finding you was but languid, resolved to go in quest of you in person; for which purpose, I have remitted to Holland the value of twenty thousand pounds, and am in possession of fifteen thousand more, with which I intended to embark myself on board of Captain Bowling, before I discovered this amazing stroke of Providence, which you may be sure has not altered my intention."

My father having entertained us with this agreeable sketch of his life, withdrew, in order to relieve Don Antonio, who, in his absence, had done the honours of his house; and I was just dressed for my appearance among the guests, when Strap arrived from the ship.

He no sooner entered the grand apartment in which I was, and saw the magnificence of my apparel, than his speech was lost in amazement, and he gaped in silence at the objects that surrounded him. I took him by the hand, observed that I had sent for him to be a witness and sharer of my happiness, and told him I had found a father. At these words he started, and after having continued some minutes with his mouth and eyes wide open,

cried, "Aha! — odd, I know what! go thy ways, poor Narcissa, and go thy ways, somebody else — well — Lord, what a thing is love! — God help us! are all our mad pranks and protestations come to this? and have you fixed your habitation in this distant land? God prosper you! — I find we must part at last — for I would not leave my poor carcass so far from my native home for all the wealth in the universe!" With these ejaculations, he began to sob and make wry faces; upon which I assured him of his mistake, both in regard to Narcissa, and my staying at Paraguay, and informed him, as briefly as I could, of the great event which had happened. Never was rapture more ludicrously expressed, than in the behaviour of this worthy creature, who cried, laughed, whistled, sung, and danced all in a breath. His transport was scarce over, when my father entered, who no sooner understood that this was Strap, than he took him by the hand, saying, "Is this the honest man, who befriended you so much in your distress? you are welcome to my house, and I will soon put it in the power of my son to reward you for your good offices in his behalf; in the meantime, go with us, and partake of the repast that is provided." Strap, wild as he was with joy, would by no means accept of the proffered honour, crying, "God forbid! — I know my distance — your worship shall excuse me." And Don Rodrigo finding his modesty invincible, recommended him to his major-domo, to be treated with the utmost respect; while he carried me into a large saloon, where I was presented to a numerous company, who loaded me

with compliments and caresses, and congratulated my father in terms not proper for me to repeat.

Without specifying the particulars of our entertainment, let it suffice to say, it was at the same time elegant and sumptuous, and the rejoicings lasted two days. After which, Don Rodrigo settled his affairs, converted his effects into silver and gold, visited and took leave of all his friends, who were grieved at his departure, and honoured me with considerable presents; and, coming on board of my uncle's ship, with the first favourable wind we sailed from the Rio de la Plata, and in two months came safe to an anchor in the harbour of Kingston, in the Island of Jamaica.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN

I VISIT MY OLD FRIEND THOMSON — WE SET SAIL FOR EUROPE — MEET WITH AN ODD ADVENTURE — ARRIVE IN ENGLAND — I RIDE ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM PORTSMOUTH TO SUSSEX — CONVERSE WITH MRS. SAGELY, WHO INFORMS ME OF NARCISSA'S BEING IN LONDON — IN CONSEQUENCE OF THIS INTELLIGENCE, I PROCEED TO CANTERBURY — MEET WITH MY OLD FRIEND MORGAN — ARRIVE AT LONDON — VISIT NARCISSA — INTRODUCE MY FATHER TO HER — HE IS CHARMED WITH HER GOOD SENSE AND BEAUTY — WE COME TO A DETERMINATION OF DEMANDING HER BROTHER'S CONSENT TO OUR MARRIAGE.

I INQUIRED, as soon as I got ashore, about my generous companion, Mr. Thomson; and hearing that he lived in a flourishing condition upon the estate left him by his wife's father, who had been dead some years, I took horse immediately, with the consent of Don Rodrigo, who had heard me mention him with great regard, and in a few hours reached the place of his habitation.

I should much wrong the delicacy of Mr. Thomson's sentiments, to say barely he was glad to see me. He felt all that the most sensible and disinterested friendship could feel on this occasion; introduced me to his wife, a very amiable young lady, who

had already blessed him with two fine children; and being as yet ignorant of my circumstances, frankly offered me the assistance of his purse and interest. I thanked him for his generous intention, and made him acquainted with my situation, on which he congratulated me with great joy, and after I had staid with him a whole day and night, accompanied me back to Kingston, to wait upon my father, whom he invited to his house. Don Rodrigo complied with his request, and, having been handsomely entertained during the space of a week, returned extremely well satisfied with the behaviour of my friend and his lady, to whom, at parting, he presented a very valuable diamond ring, as a token of his esteem. During the course of my conversation with Mr. Thomson, he gave me to understand, that his and my old commander, Captain Oakum, was dead some months; and that, immediately after his death, a discovery had been made of some valuable effects that he had feloniously secreted out of a prize, by the assistance of Doctor Mackshane, who was now actually in prison on that account, and, being destitute of friends, subsisted solely on the charity of my friend, whose bounty he had implored in the most abject manner, after having been the barbarous occasion of driving him to that terrible extremity on board of the *Thunder*, which we have formerly related. Whatsoever this wretch might have been guilty of, I applauded Mr. Thomson's generosity towards him in his distress, which wrought so much upon me also, that I sent him ten pistoles, in such a private manner, that he could never know his benefactor.

While my father and I were caressed among the gentlemen on shore, Captain Bowling had written to his owners, by the packet, which sailed a few days after our arrival, signifying his prosperous voyage hitherto, and desiring them to insure his ship and cargo homeward-bound; after which precaution, he applied himself so heartily to the task of loading his ship, that, with the assistance of Mr. Thomson, she was full in less than six weeks. This kind gentleman likewise procured for Don Rodrigo bills upon London for the greatest part of his gold and silver, by which means it was secured against the risk of the seas and the enemy; and, before we sailed, supplied us with such large quantities of all kinds of stock, that not only we, but the ship's company, fared sumptuously during the voyage.

Everything being ready, we took our leave of our kind entertainers, and, going on board at Port Royal, set sail for England on the first day of June. We beat up to windward, with fine easy weather; and one night, believing ourselves near Cape Tiberoon, lay to, with an intention to wood and water next morning in the bay. While we remained in this situation, a sailor, having drank more new rum than he could carry, staggered overboard, and, notwithstanding all the means that could be used to preserve him, went to the bottom and disappeared. About two hours after this melancholy accident happened, as I enjoyed the cool air on the quarter-deck, I heard a voice rising, as it were, out of the sea, and calling, "Ho, the ship, ahoy!" Upon which one of the men upon the forecastle, cried, "I'll be d—ned, if

that an't Jack Marlinspike, who went overboard!" Not a little surprised at this event, I jumped into the boat that lay alongside, with the second mate and four men, and, rowing towards the place from whence the voice (which repeated the hail) seemed to proceed, we perceived something floating upon the water; when we had rowed a little farther, we discerned it to be a man riding upon a hencoop, who, seeing us approach, pronounced with a hoarse voice, "D—n your bloods! why did you not answer when I hailed?" Our mate, who was a veritable seaman, hearing this salute, said, "By G—, my lads, this is none of our man. This is the devil — pull away for the ship." The fellows obeyed his command, without question, and were already some fathoms on our return, when I insisted on their taking up the poor creature, and prevailed upon them to go back to the wreck; which when we came near the second time, and signified our intention, we received an answer of, "Avast, avast, — what ship, brother?" Being satisfied in this particular, he cried, "D—n the ship, I was in hopes it had been my own — where are you bound?" We satisfied his curiosity in this particular too; upon which he suffered himself to be taken on board, and, after having been comforted with a dram, told us, he belonged to the *Vesuvio* man-of-war, upon a cruise off the Island of Hispaniola; he had fallen overboard about four-and-twenty hours ago, and the ship being under sail, they did not choose to bring to, but tossed a hencoop overboard for his convenience, upon which he was in good hopes of reaching the Cape next morning; howsomever, he

was as well content to be a-board of us, because he did not doubt that we should meet his ship; and, if he had gone ashore in the bay, he might have been taken prisoner by the French. My uncle and father were very much diverted with the account of this fellow's unconcerned behaviour; and, in two days, meeting with the *Vesuvio*, as he expected, sent him on board of her, according to his desire.

Having beat up successfully the Windward Passage, we stretched to the northward, and falling in with a westerly wind, in eight weeks arrived in soundings, and in two days after made the Lizard. It is impossible to express the joy I felt at the sight of English ground! Don Rodrigo was not unmoved, and Strap shed tears of gladness. The sailors profited by our satisfaction; the shoe that was nailed to the mast being quite filled with our liberality. My uncle resolved to run up into the Downs at once; but the wind shifting when we were abreast of the Isle of Wight, he was obliged to turn into St. Helen's, and come to Spithead, to the great mortification of the crew, thirty of whom were immediately pressed on board of a man-of-war.

My father and I went ashore immediately at Portsmouth, leaving Strap with the captain to go round with the ship and take care of our effects; and I discovered so much impatience to see my charming Narcissa, that my father permitted me to ride across the country to her brother's house; while he should hire a post-chaise for London, where he would wait for me at a place to which I directed him.

Fired with all the eagerness of passion, I took post

that very night, and in the morning reached an inn, about three miles from the squire's habitation; here I remained till next morning, allaying the torture of my impatience with the rapturous hope of seeing that divine creature, after an absence of eighteen months, which, far from impairing, had raised my love to the most exalted pitch! Neither were my reflections free from apprehensions, that sometimes intervened in spite of all my hope, and represented her as having yielded to the importunity of her brother, and blessed the arms of an happy rival. My thoughts were even maddened with the fear of her death; and when I arrived in the dark at the house of Mrs. Sagely, I had not for some time courage to desire admittance, lest my soul should be shocked with dismal tidings. At length, however, I knocked, and no sooner certified the good gentlewoman of my voice, than she opened the door and received me with a most affectionate embrace, that brought tears into her aged eyes. "For Heaven's sake! dear mother," cried I, "tell me, how is Narcissa? is she the same that I left her?" She blessed my ears with saying, "She is as beautiful, in as good health, and as much yours as ever."

Transported at this assurance, I begged to know if I could not see her that very night; when this sage matron gave me to understand that my mistress was in London, and that things were strangely altered in the squire's house since my departure; that he had been married a whole year to Melinda, who at first found means to wean his attention so much from Narcissa, that he became quite careless of that lovely sis-

ter, comforting himself with the clause in his father's will, by which she should forfeit her fortune by marrying without his consent; that my mistress, being but indifferently treated by her sister-in-law, had made use of her freedom some months ago, and gone to town, where she was lodged with Miss Williams, in expectation of my arrival; and had been pestered with the addresses of Lord Quiverwit, who, finding her heart engaged, had fallen upon a great many shifts to persuade her that I was dead; but, finding all his artifices unsuccessful, and despairing of gaining her affection, he had consoled himself for her indifference, by marrying another lady some weeks ago, who had already left him on account of some family uneasiness. Besides this interesting information, she told me, that there was not a great deal of harmony between Melinda and the squire, who was so much disgusted at the number of gallants who continued to hover about her even after marriage, that he had hurried her down into the country, much against her own inclination, where their mutual animosities had risen to such a height, that they preserved no decency before company or servants, but abused one another in the grossest terms.

This good old gentlewoman, to give me a convincing proof of my dear Narcissa's unalterable love, gratified me with a sight of the last letter she had favoured her with, in which I was mentioned with so much honour, tenderness, and concern, that my soul was fired with impatience, and I determined to ride all night, that I might have it the sooner in my power to make her happy. Mrs. Sagely perceiving

my eagerness, and her maternal affection being equally divided between Narcissa and me, begged leave to remind me of the sentiments with which I went abroad, that would not permit me for any selfish gratification to prejudice the fortune of that amiable young lady, who must entirely depend upon me, after having bestowed herself in marriage. I thanked her for her kind concern, and as briefly as possible described my flourishing situation, which afforded this humane person infinite wonder and satisfaction. I told her, that now I had an opportunity to manifest my gratitude for the obligations I owed, I would endeavour to make her old age comfortable and easy; as a step to which, I proposed she should come and live with Narcissa and me. This venerable gentlewoman was so much affected with my words, that the tears ran down her ancient cheeks; she thanked Heaven that I had not belied the presages she had made, on her first acquaintance with me; acknowledging my generosity, as she called it, in the most elegant and pathetic expressions; but declined my proposal, on account of her attachment to the dear melancholy cottage where she had so peacefully consumed her solitary widowhood. Finding her immovable on this subject, I insisted on her accepting a present of thirty guineas, and took my leave, resolving to accommodate her with the same sum annually, for the more comfortable support of the infirmities of old age.

Having rode all night, I found myself at Canterbury in the morning, where I alighted to procure fresh horses; and, as I walked into the inn, perceived

an apothecary's shop on the other side of the street, with the name of Morgan over the door. Alarmed at this discovery, I could not help thinking that my old messmate had settled in this place; and, upon inquiry, found my conjecture true, and that he was married lately to a widow in that city, by whom he had got three thousand pounds. Rejoiced at this intelligence, I went to his shop as soon as it was open, and found my friend behind the counter, busy in preparing a glyster. I saluted him at entrance, with "Your servant, Mr. Morgan." Upon which he looked at me, and replying, "Your most humble servant, goot sir!" rubbed his ingredients in the mortar, without any emotion. "What!" said I, "Morgan, have you forgot your old messmate?" At these words, he looked up again, and starting, cried, "As Got is my — sure it cannot — yes, by my salfation, I pelieve it is my dear friend Mr. Rantom." He was no sooner convinced of my identity, than he threw down the pestle, overset the mortar, and jumping over the board, swept up the contents with his clothes, flew about my neck, hugged me affectionately, and daubed me all over with turpentine and the yolks of eggs, which he had been mixing when I came in. Our mutual congratulations being over, he told me, that he found himself a widower upon his return from the West Indies; that he had got interest to be appointed surgeon of a man-of-war, in which capacity he had served some years, until he married an apothecary's widow, with whom he now enjoyed a pretty good sum of money, peace and quiet, and an indifferent good trade. He was very desirous of hearing my

adventures, which I assured him I had not time to relate, but told him in general, my circumstances were very good, and that I hoped to see him when I should not be in such a hurry as at present. He insisted, however, on my staying breakfast, and introduced me to his wife, who seemed to be a decent sensible woman, pretty well stricken in years. In the course of our conversation, he showed the sleeve buttons I had exchanged with him at our parting in the West Indies, and was not a little proud to see that I had preserved his with the same care. When I informed him of Mackshane's condition, he seemed at first to exult over his distress; but, after a little recollection, said, "Well, he has paid for his malice, I forgife him, and may Got forgife him likewise." He expressed great concern for the soul of Captain Oakum, which he believed was now gnashing its teeth; but it was some time before I could convince him of Thomson's being alive, at whose good fortune, nevertheless, he was extremely glad.

Having renewed our protestations of friendship, I bade the honest Welshman and his spouse farewell, and taking post-horses, arrived at London that same night, where I found my father in good health, to whom I imparted what I had learned of Narcissa. This indulgent parent approved of my intention of marrying her, even without a fortune, provided her brother's consent could not be obtained; promised to make over to me in a few days a sufficiency to maintain her in a fashionable manner, and expressed a desire of seeing this amiable creature, who had captivated me so much. As I had not slept the

night before, and was besides fatigued with my journey, I found myself under a necessity of taking some repose, and went to bed accordingly; next morning about ten o'clock, took a chair, and, according to Mrs. Sagely's directions, went to my charmer's lodgings, and inquired for Miss Williams. I had not waited in the parlour longer than a minute, when this young woman entered, and no sooner perceived me, than she shrieked and ran backward; but I got between her and the door, and clasping her in my arms, brought her to herself with an embrace. "Good Heaven," cried she, "Mr. Random, is it you indeed? my mistress will run distracted with joy." I told her, it was from an apprehension that my sudden appearance might have some bad effect on my dear Narcissa, that I had desired to see her first, in order to concert some method of acquainting her mistress gradually with my arrival. She approved of my conduct, and, after having yielded to the suggestions of her own friendship, in asking if my voyage had been successful, charged herself with that office, and left me glowing with desire of seeing and embracing the object of my love.

In a very little time I heard somebody come downstairs in haste, and the voice of my angel pronounce, with an eager tone, "O Heaven! is it possible! where is he?" How were my faculties aroused at this well-known sound! and how was my soul transported, when she broke in upon my view, in all the bloom of ripened beauty! *Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye, in every gesture dignity and love!* — You whose souls are susceptible of the most delicate im-

pressions, whose tender bosoms have felt the affecting vicissitudes of love, who have suffered an absence of eighteen long months from the dear object of your hope, and found at your return the melting fair, as kind and as constant as your heart could wish, do me justice on this occasion, and conceive what unutterable rapture possessed us both, while we flew into each other's arms! This was no time for speech, — locked in a mutual embrace, we continued some minutes in a silent trance of joy! — When I thus encircled all that my soul held dear, while I hung over her beauties, — beheld her eyes sparkle, and every feature flush with virtuous fondness; when I saw her enchanting bosom heave with undissembled rapture, and knew myself the happy cause — Heavens! what was my situation! I am tempted to commit my paper to the flames, and to renounce my pen for ever, because its most ardent and lucky expression so poorly describes the emotions of my soul. "O adorable Narcissa!" cried I; "O miracle of beauty, love, and truth! I at last fold thee in my arms! I at last can call thee mine! No jealous brother shall thwart our happiness again; fortune hath at length recompensed me for all my sufferings, and enabled me to do justice to my love." The dear creature smiled ineffably charming, and, with a look of bewitching tenderness, said, "And shall we never part again?" "Never," I replied, "thou wondrous pattern of all earthly perfection! never, until death shall divide us! By this ambrosial kiss, a thousand times more fragrant than the breeze that sweeps the orange grove, I never more will leave thee!"

As my first transport abated, my passion grew turbulent and unruly. I was giddy with standing on the brink of bliss, and all my virtue and philosophy were scarce sufficient to restrain the inordinate sallies of desire. Narcissa perceived the conflict within me, and, with her usual dignity of prudence, called off my imagination from the object in view, and, with eager expressions of interested curiosity, desired to know the particulars of my voyage. In this I gratified her inclination, bringing my story down to the present hour. She was infinitely surprised at the circumstance of my finding my father, which brought tears into her lovely eyes. She was transported at hearing that he approved my flame, discovered a longing desire of being introduced to him, congratulated herself and me upon my good fortune, and observed that this great and unexpected stroke of fate seemed to have been brought about by the immediate direction of Providence. Having entertained ourselves some hours with the genuine effusions of our souls, I obtained her consent to complete my happiness as soon as my father should judge it proper, and, applying with my own hands a valuable necklace, composed of diamonds and amethysts set alternately, which an old Spanish lady at Paraguay had presented me with, I took my leave, promising to return in the afternoon with Don Rodrigo.

When I went home, this generous parent inquired very affectionately about the health of my dear Narcissa, to whom that I might be the more agreeable, he put into my hand a deed, by which I found myself in possession of fifteen thousand pounds, exclusive of

the profits of my own merchandise, which amounted to three thousand more. After dinner I accompanied him to the lodging of my mistress, who, being dressed for the occasion, made a most dazzling appearance. I could perceive him struck with her figure, which I really think was the most beautiful that ever was created under the sun. He embraced her tenderly, and told her he was proud of having a son who had a spirit to attempt, and qualifications to engage the affections of such a fine lady. She blushed at this compliment, and with eyes full of the softest languishment turned upon me, said, she should have been unworthy of Mr. Random's attention, had she been blind to his extraordinary merit. I made no other answer than a low bow. My father, sighing, pronounced, "Such once was my Charlotte!" while the tear rushed into his eye, and the tender heart of Narcissa manifested itself in two precious drops of sympathy, which, but for his presence, I would have kissed away. Without repeating the particulars of our conversation, I shall only observe, that Don Rodrigo was as much charmed with her good sense as with her appearance; and she was no less pleased with his understanding and polite address. It was determined that he should write to the squire, signifying his approbation of my passion for his sister, and offering a settlement which he should have no reason to reject; and that, if he should refuse the proposal, we would crown our mutual wishes without any farther regard to his will.

CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT

MY FATHER MAKES A PRESENT TO NARCISSA — THE LETTER IS DESPATCHED TO HER BROTHER — I APPEAR AMONG MY ACQUAINTANCE — BANTER'S BEHAVIOUR — THE SQUIRE REFUSES HIS CONSENT — MY UNCLE COMES TO TOWN — APPROVES OF MY CHOICE — I AM MARRIED — WE MEET THE SQUIRE AND HIS LADY AT THE PLAY — OUR ACQUAINTANCE IS COURTED.

AFTER having spent the evening to the satisfaction of all present, my father addressed himself thus to Narcissa, "Madam, give me leave to consider you hereafter as my daughter, in which capacity I insist upon your accepting this first instance of my paternal duty and affection." With these words he put into her hand a bank note of £500, which she no sooner examined, than, with a low curtsey, she replied, "Dear sir, though I have not the least occasion for this supply, I have too great a veneration for you to refuse this proof of your generosity and esteem, which I the more freely receive, because I already look upon Mr. Random's interest as inseparably connected with mine." He was extremely well pleased with her frank and ingenuous reply; upon which we saluted, and wished her good night. The letter, at my request, was despatched to Sussex by an express, and, in the meantime, Don Rodrigo, to

grace my nuptials, hired a ready furnished house, and set up a very handsome equipage.

Though I passed the greatest part of the day with the darling of my soul, I found leisure sometimes to be among my former acquaintance, who were astonished at the magnificence of my appearance. Banter, in particular, was confounded at the strange vicissitudes of my fortune, the causes of which he endeavoured in vain to discover, until I thought fit to disclose the whole secret of my last voyage, partly in consideration of our former intimacy, and partly to prevent unfavourable conjectures, which he and others, in all probability, would have made in regard to my circumstances. He professed great satisfaction at this piece of news, and I had no cause to believe him insincere, when I considered that he would now look upon himself as acquitted of the debt he owed me, and at the same time flatter himself with hopes of borrowing more. I carried him home to dinner with me, and my father liked his conversation so much, that, upon hearing his difficulties, he desired me to accommodate him for the present, and inquire if he would accept of a commission in the army, towards the purchase of which he would willingly lend him money.

Accordingly, I gave my friend an opportunity of being alone with me, when, as I expected, he told me that he was just on the point of being reconciled to an old rich uncle, whose heir he was, but wanted a few pieces for immediate expense, which he desired I would lend him, and take his bond for the whole. His demand was limited to ten guineas; and when

I put twenty into his hand, he stared at me for some moments; then putting it into his purse, said, "Ay, 't is all one, — you shall have the whole in a very short time." When I had taken his note, to save the expense of a bond, I expressed some surprise that a fellow of his spirit should loiter away his time in idleness, and asked why he did not choose to make his fortune in the army? "What!" said he, "throw away my money upon a subaltern's commission, to be under the command of a parcel of scoundrels, who have raised themselves above me by the most infamous practices! No, I love independency too well to sacrifice my life, health, and pleasure, for such a pitiful consideration." Finding him averse to this way of life, I changed the subject, and returned to Don Rodrigo, who had just received the following epistle from the squire: —

"Sir, — Concerning a letter which I received, subscribed R. Random, this is the answer. As for you, I know nothing of you. Your son, or pretended son, I have seen; — if he marries my sister, at his peril be it; I do declare, that he shall not have one farthing of her fortune, which becomes my property, if she takes a husband without my consent. Your settlement, I do believe, is all a sham, and yourself no better than you should be; but if you had all the wealth of the Indies, your son shall never match in our family, with the consent of

"Orson Topehall."

My father was not much surprised at this polite letter, after having heard the character of the author; and, as for me, I was even pleased at his refusal

because I now had an opportunity of showing my disinterested love. By his permission I waited on my charmer; and, having imparted the contents of her brother's letter, at which she wept bitterly, in spite of all my consolation and caresses, the time of our marriage was fixed at the distance of two days. During this interval, in which my soul was wound up to the last stretch of rapturous expectation, Narcissa endeavoured to reconcile some of her relations in town to her marriage with me; but, finding them all deaf to her remonstrances, either out of envy or prejudice, she told me with the most enchanting sweetness, while the tears bedewed her lovely cheeks, "Sure the world will no longer question your generosity, when you take a poor forlorn beggar to your arms." Affected with her sorrow, I pressed the fair mourner to my breast, and swore that she was more dear and welcome on that account, because she had sacrificed her friends and fortune to her love for me. My uncle, for whose character she had a great veneration, being by this time come to town, I introduced him to my bride; and, although he was not very much subject to refined sensations, he was struck dumb with admiration at her beauty. After having kissed and gazed at her for some time, he turned to me, saying, "Odds bobs, Rory! here's a notable prize, indeed, finely built and gloriously rigged, i' faith! if she an't well manned when you have the command of her, sirrah, you deserve to go to sea in a cockle-shell. No offence, I hope, niece; you must not mind what I say, being, as the saying is, a plain seafaring man; thof, mayhap, I have as much regard

for you as another." She received him with great civility, told him she had longed a great while to see a person to whom she was so much indebted for his generosity to Mr. Random; that she looked upon him as her uncle, by which name she begged leave to call him for the future; and that she was very sure he could say nothing that would give her the least offence. The honest captain was transported at her courteous behaviour, and insisted upon giving her away at the ceremony, swearing that he loved her as well as if she was his own child, and that he would give two thousand guineas to the first fruit of our love, as soon as it could squeak.

Everything being prepared for the solemnisation of our nuptials, which were to be performed privately at my father's house, the auspicious hour arrived, when Don Rodrigo and my uncle went in the coach to fetch the bride and Miss Williams; leaving me with a parson, Banter, and Strap, neither of whom had as yet seen my charming mistress. My faithful valet, who was on the rack of impatience to behold a lady of whom he had heard so much, no sooner understood that the coach was returned, than he placed himself at a window to have a peep at her as she alighted; and when he saw her, clapped his hands together, turned up the white of his eyes, and, with his mouth wide open, remained in a sort of ecstasy, which broke out into "*O Dea certe! qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi, exercet Diana choros!*" The doctor and Banter were surprised to hear my man speak Latin; but when my father led Narcissa into the room, the object of their admira-

tion was soon changed, as appeared in the countenances of both. Indeed, they must have been the most insensible of all beings, could they have beheld, without emotion, the divine creature that approached! She was dressed in a sack of white satin, embroidered on the breast with gold; the crown of her head was covered with a small French cap, from whence descended her beautiful hair in ringlets that waved upon her snowy neck, which dignified the necklace I had given her; her looks glowed with modesty and love; and her bosom, through the veil of gauze that shaded it, afforded a prospect of Elysium!

I received this inestimable gift of Providence as became me; and in a little time the clergyman did his office, my uncle, at his own earnest request, acting the part of a father to my dear Narcissa, who trembled very much, and had scarce spirits sufficient to support her under this great change of situation. Soon as she was mine by the laws of heaven and earth, I printed a burning kiss upon her lips, my father embraced her tenderly, my uncle hugged her with great affection, and I presented her to my friend Banter, who saluted her in a very polite manner; Miss Williams hung round her neck, and wept plentifully; while Strap fell upon his knees, and begged to kiss his lady's hand, which she presented with great affability. I shall not pretend to describe my own feelings at this juncture; let it suffice to say, that, after having supped and entertained ourselves till ten o'clock, I cautioned my Narcissa against exposing her health by sitting up too late, and she was prevailed upon to withdraw with her maid to an

apartment destined for us. When she left the room, her face was overspread with a blush that set all my blood in a state of fermentation, and made every pulse beat with tenfold vigour! She was so cruel as to let me remain in this condition a full half hour; when, no longer able to restrain my impatience, I broke from the company, burst into her chamber, pushed out her confidant, locked the door, and found her — O heaven and earth! — a feast, a thousand times more delicious than my most sanguine hope presaged! — But let me not profane the chaste mysteries of Hymen. I was the happiest of men!

In the morning I was waked by three or four drums, which Banter had placed under the window; upon which I withdrew the curtain, and enjoyed the unspeakable satisfaction of contemplating those angelic charms, which were now in my possession! *Beauty which, whether sleeping or awake, shot forth peculiar graces!* The light darting upon my Narcissa's eyes, she awoke also, and, recollecting her situation, hid her blushes in my bosom. I was distracted with joy! I could not believe the evidence of my senses, and looked upon all that had happened as the fictions of a dream! In the meantime my uncle knocked at the door, and bade me turn out, for I had had a long spell. I rose accordingly, and sent Miss Williams to her mistress, myself receiving the congratulations of Captain Bowling, who rallied me in his sea phrase with great success. In less than an hour Don Rodrigo led my wife in to breakfast, where she received the compliments of the company on her looks, which, they said, if possible,

were improved by matrimony. As her delicate ears were offended with none of those indecent ambiguities which are too often spoke on such occasions, she behaved with dignity, unaffected modesty, and ease; and, as a testimony of my affection and esteem, I presented her, in presence of them all, with a deed, by which I settled the whole fortune I was possessed of on her and her heirs for ever. She accepted it with a glance of most tender acknowledgment, observed, that she could not be surprised at anything of this kind I should do, and desired my father to take the trouble of keeping it, saying, "Next to my own Mr. Random, you are the person in whom I ought to have the greatest confidence." Charmed with her prudent and ingenuous manner of proceeding, he took the paper, and assured her that it should not lose its value while in his custody.

As we had not many visits to give and receive, the little time we staid in town was spent in going to public diversions, where I have the vanity to think Narcissa was seldom eclipsed. One night in particular, we had sent our footman to keep one of the stage boxes, which we no sooner entered, than we perceived in the opposite box the squire and his lady, who seemed not a little surprised at seeing us. I was pleased at this opportunity of confronting them; the more, because Melinda was robbed of all her admirers by my wife, who happened that night to outshine her sister both in beauty and dress. She was piqued at Narcissa's victory, tossed her head a thousand different ways, flirted her fan, looked at us with disdain, then whispered to her husband, and

broke out into an affected giggle; but all arts proved ineffectual, either to discompose Mrs. Random, or to conceal her own mortification, which at length forced her away long before the play was done. The news of our marriage being spread with many circumstances to our disadvantage, by the industry of this malignant creature, a certain set of persons, fond of scandal, began to inquire into the particulars of my fortune, which they no sooner understood to be independent, than the tables were turned, and our acquaintance courted as much as it had been despised before. But Narcissa had too much dignity of pride to encourage this change of conduct, especially in her relations, whom she could never be prevailed upon to see, after the malicious reports they had raised to her prejudice.

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE

MY FATHER INTENDS TO REVISIT THE PLACE OF HIS NATIVITY — WE PROMISE TO ACCOMPANY HIM — MY UNCLE RENEWS HIS WILL IN MY FAVOUR, DETERMINING TO GO TO SEA AGAIN — WE SET OUT FOR SCOTLAND — ARRIVE AT EDINBURGH — PURCHASE OUR PATERNAL ESTATE — PROCEED TO IT — HALT AT THE TOWN WHERE I WAS EDUCATED — TAKE UP MY BOND TO CRAB — THE BEHAVIOUR OF POTION AND HIS WIFE, AND ONE OF MY FEMALE COUSINS — OUR RECEPTION AT THE ESTATE — STRAP MARRIES MISS WILLIAMS, AND IS SETTLED BY MY FATHER TO HIS OWN SATISFACTION — I AM MORE AND MORE HAPPY.

MY father intending to revisit his native country, and pay the tribute of a few tears at my mother's grave, Narcissa and I resolved to accompany him in the execution of his pious office, and accordingly prepared for the journey; in which, however, my uncle would not engage, being resolved to try his fortune once more at sea. In the meantime he renewed his will in favour of my wife and me, and deposited it in the hands of his brother-in-law. While I, that I might not be wanting to my own interest, summoned the squire to produce his father's will at Doctors' Commons, and employed a proctor to manage the affair in my absence.

Everything being thus settled, we took leave of all our friends in London, and set out for Scotland, Don Rodrigo, Narcissa, Miss Williams, and I, in the coach, and Strap with two men in livery on horseback. As we made easy stages, my charmer held it out very well till we arrived at Edinburgh, where we proposed to rest ourselves some weeks.

Here Don Rodrigo having intelligence that the fox-hunter had spent his estate, which was to be exposed to sale by public auction, he determined to make a purchase of the spot where he was born, and actually bought all the land that belonged to his father.

In a few days after this bargain was made, we left Edinburgh, in order to go and take possession; and, by the way, halted one night in that town where I was educated. Upon inquiry, I found that Mr. Crab was dead; whereupon I sent for his executor, paid the sum I owed, with interest, and took up my bond. Mr. Potion and his wife, hearing of our arrival, had the assurance to come to the inn where we lodged, and send up their names, with a desire of being permitted to pay their respects to my father and me; but their sordid behaviour towards me, when I was an orphan, had made too deep an impression on my mind, to be effaced by this mean mercenary piece of condescension. I therefore rejected their message with disdain, and bade Strap tell them, that my father and I desired to have no communication with such low-minded wretches as they were.

They had not been gone half an hour, when a

woman, without any ceremony, opened the door of the room where we sat, and, making towards my father, accosted him with, "Uncle, your servant — I am glad to see you." This was no other than one of my female cousins, mentioned in the first part of my memoirs, to whom Don Rodrigo replied, "Pray, who are you, madam?" "O!" cried she, "my cousin Rory there knows me very well. — Don't you remember me, Rory?" "Yes, madam," said I; "for my own part, I shall never forget you. Sir, this is one of the young ladies, who, as I formerly told you, treated me so humanely in my childhood!" When I pronounced these words, my father's resentment glowed in his visage, and he ordered her to be gone, with such a commanding aspect, that she retired in a fright, muttering curses as she went downstairs. We afterwards learned that she was married to an ensign, who had already spent all her fortune; and that her sister had bor[n]e a child to her mother's footman, who is now her husband, and keeps a petty alehouse in the country.

The fame of our flourishing condition having arrived at this place before us, we got notice that the magistrates intended next day to compliment us with the freedom of their town; upon which my father, considering their complaisance in the right point of view, ordered the horses to the coach early in the morning.

We proceeded to our estate, which lay about twenty miles from this place; and when we came within half a league of the house, were met by

a prodigious number of poor tenants, men, women, and children, who testified their joy by loud acclamations, and accompanied our coach to the gate. As there is no part of the world in which the peasants are more attached to their lords than in Scotland, we were almost devoured by their affection. My father had always been their favourite, and, now that he appeared their master, after having been thought dead so long, their joy broke out into a thousand extravagances. When we entered the court-yard, we were surrounded by a vast number, who crowded together so closely to see us, that several were in danger of being squeezed to death; those who were near Don Rodrigo fell upon their knees, and kissed his hand, or the hem of his garment, praying aloud for long life and prosperity to him; others approached Narcissa and me in the same manner; while the rest clapped their hands at a distance, and invoked Heaven to shower its choicest blessings on our heads! In short, the whole scene, though rude, was so affecting, that the gentle partner of my heart wept over it, and my father himself could not refrain from dropping a tear.

Having welcomed his daughter and me to his house, he ordered some bullocks to be killed, and some hogsheads of ale to be brought from the neighbouring village, to regale these honest people, who had not enjoyed such a holiday for many years before.

Next day we were visited by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, most of them our relations, one

of whom brought along with him my cousin the fox-hunter, who had stayed at his house since he was obliged to leave his own. My father was generous enough to receive him kindly, and even promise to purchase for him a commission in the army, for which he expressed great thankfulness and joy.

My charming Narcissa was universally admired and loved for her beauty, affability, and good sense; and so well pleased with the situation of the place, and the company round, that she has not as yet discovered the least desire of changing her habitation.

We had not been many days settled, when I prevailed upon my father to pay a visit to the village where I had been at school. Here we were received by the principal inhabitants, who entertained us in the church, where Mr. Syntax the schoolmaster, my tyrant being dead, pronounced a Latin oration in honour of our family. And none exerted themselves more than Strap's father and relations, who looked upon the honest valet as the first gentleman of their race, and honoured his benefactors accordingly. Having received the homage of this place, we retired, leaving forty pounds for the benefit of the poor of the parish, and that very night, Strap being a little elevated with the regard that had been shown to him, and to me on his account, ventured to tell me, that he had a sneaking kindness for Miss Williams, and that, if his lady and I would use our interest in his behalf, he did not doubt that she would listen to

his addresses. Surprised at this proposal, I asked if he knew the story of that unfortunate young gentlewoman. Upon which he replied, "Yes, yes, I know what you mean — she has been unhappy, I grant you — but what of that? I am convinced of her reformation; or else you and my good lady would not treat her with such respect. — As for the censure of the world, I value it not a fig's end — besides, the world knows nothing of the matter." I commended his philosophy, and interested Narcissa in his cause; who interceded so effectually, that, in a little time, Miss Williams yielded her consent, and they were married with the approbation of Don Rodrigo, who gave him five hundred pounds to stock a farm, and made him overseer of his estate. My generous bedfellow gave her maid the same sum; so that they live in great peace and plenty within half a mile of us, and daily put up prayers for our preservation.

If there be such a thing as true happiness on earth I enjoy it. The impetuous transports of my passion are now settled and mellowed into endearing fondness and tranquillity of love, rooted by that intimate connexion and interchange of hearts, which nought but virtuous wedlock can produce. — Fortune seems determined to make ample amends for her former cruelty; for my proctor writes, that, notwithstanding the clause in my father-in-law's will, on which the squire founds his claim, I shall certainly recover my wife's fortune, in consequence of a codicil annexed, which explains that clause, and limits her restriction to the age of nineteen, after

which she was at her own disposal. I would have set out for London immediately after receiving this piece of intelligence, but my dear angel has been qualmish of late, and begins to grow remarkably round in the waist; so that I cannot leave her in such an interesting situation, which I hope will produce something to crown my felicity.

THE END.

CRABSHAW'S VISIT TO THE CONJURER

And behind this desk appeared the conjurer himself

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THE ADVENTURES
OF
SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES

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INTRODUCTION

"IT was on the great northern road from York to London, about the beginning of the month of October, and the hour of eight in the evening, that four travellers were, by a violent shower of rain, driven for shelter into a little public-house on the side of the highway, distinguished by a sign which was said to exhibit the figure of a black lion. The kitchen, in which they assembled, was the only room for entertainment in the house, paved with red bricks, remarkably clean, furnished with three or four Windsor chairs, adorned with shining plates of pewter, and copper saucepans, nicely scoured, that even dazzled the eyes of the beholder; while a cheerful fire of sea-coal blazed in the chimney."

It would be hard to find a better beginning for a wholesome novel of English life, than these first two sentences in *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*. They are full of comfort and promise. They promise that we shall get rapidly into the story; and so we do. They give us the hope, in which we are not to be disappointed, that we shall see a good deal of those English inns which to this

day are delightful in reality, and which to generations of readers, have been delightful in fancy. Truly, English fiction, without its inns, were as much poorer as the English country, without these same hostelries, were less comfortable. For few things in the world has the so-called "Anglo-Saxon" race more reason to be grateful than for good old English inns. Finally there is a third promise in these opening sentences of *Sir Launcelot Greaves*. "The great northern road!" It was that over which the youthful Smollett made his way to London in 1739; it was that over which, less than nine years later, he sent us travelling in company with Random and Strap and the queer people whom they met on their way. And so there is the promise that Smollett, after his departure in *Count Fathom* from the field of personal experience which erstwhile he cultivated so successfully, has returned to see if the ground will yield him another rich harvest. Though it must be admitted that in *Sir Launcelot Greaves* his labours were but partially successful, yet the story possesses a good deal of the lively verisimilitude which *Fathom* lacked. The very first page, as we have seen, shows that its inns are going to be real. So, too, are most of its highway adventures, and also its portion of those prison scenes of which Smollett seems to have been so fond. As for the description of the parliamentary election, it is by no means the least graphic of its kind in the fiction of the last two centuries. The speech of Sir Valentine Quickset, the fox-hunting Tory candidate, is excellent, both for its brevity and

for its simplicity. Any of his bumpkin audience could understand perfectly his principal points: that he spends his estate of "vive thousand clear" at home in old English hospitality; that he comes of pure old English stock; that he hates all foreigners, not excepting those from Hanover; and that if he is elected, he "will cross the ministry in everything, as in duty bound."

In the characters, likewise, though less than in the scenes just spoken of, we recognise something of the old Smollett touch. True, it is not high praise to say of Miss Aurelia Darnel that she is more alive, or rather less lifeless, than Smollett's heroines have been heretofore. Nor can we give great praise to the characterisation of Sir Launcelot. Yet if less substantial than Smollett's roystering heroes, he is more distinct than de Melvil in *Fathom*, the only one of our author's earlier young men, by the way, (with the possible exception of Godfrey Gauntlet) who can stand beside Greaves in never failing to be a gentleman. It is a pity, when Greaves's character is so lovable, and save for his knight-errantry, so well conceived, that the image is not more distinct. Crowe is distinct enough, however, though not quite consistently drawn. There is justice in Scott's objection[1] that nothing in the seaman's "life . . . renders it at all possible that he should have caught" the baronet's Quixotism. Otherwise, so far from finding fault with the old sailor, we are pleased to see Smollett returning in him to a favour-

[1] *Tobias Smollett* in *Biographical and Critical Notices of Eminent Novelists.*

ite type. It might be thought that he would have exhausted the possibilities of this type in Bowling and Trunnion and Pipes and Hatchway. In point of fact, Crowe is by no means the equal of the first two of these. And yet, with his heart in the right place, and his application of sea terms to land objects, Captain Samuel Crowe has a good deal of the rough charm of his prototypes. Still more distinct, and among Smollett's personages a more novel figure, is the Captain's nephew, the dapper, verbose, tender-hearted lawyer, Tom Clarke. Apart from the inevitable Smollett exaggeration, a better portrait of a softish young attorney could hardly be painted. Nor, in enumerating the characters of *Sir Launcelot Greaves* who fix themselves in a reader's memory, should Tom's inamorata, Dolly, be forgotten, or the malicious Ferret, or that precious pair, Justice and Mrs. Gobble, or the Knight's squire, Timothy Crabshaw, or that very individual horse, Gilbert, whose lot is to be one moment caressed, and the next, cursed for a "hard-hearted, unchristian tuoad."

Barring the Gobbles, all these characters are important in the book from first to last. *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, then, is significant among Smollett's novels, as indicating a reliance upon the personages for interest quite as much as upon the adventures. If the author failed in a similar intention in *Fathom*, it was not through lack of clearly conceived characters, but through failure to make them flesh and blood. In that book, however, he put the adventures together more skilfully than in *Sir*

Launcelot Greaves, the plot of which is not only rather meagre but also far-fetched. There seems to be no adequate reason for the baronet's whim of becoming an English Don Quixote of the eighteenth century, except the chance it gave Smollett for imitating Cervantes. He was evidently hampered from the start by the consciousness that at best the success of such imitation would be doubtful. Probably he expresses his own misgivings when he makes Ferret exclaim to the hero: "What! . . . you set up for a modern Don Quixote? The scheme is rather too stale and extravagant. What was a . . . well-time satire in Spain near two hundred years ago, will . . . appear . . . insipid and absurd . . . at this time of day, in a country like England." Whether from the author's half-heartedness or from some other cause, there is no denying that the Quixotism in *Sir Launcelot Greaves* is flat. It is a drawback to the book rather than an aid. The plot could have developed itself just as well, the high-minded young baronet might have had just as entertaining adventures, without his imitation of the fine old Spanish Don.

I have remarked on the old Smollett touch in *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, — the individual touch of which we are continually sensible in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*, but seldom in *Count Fathom*. With it is a new Smollett touch, indicative of a kindlier feeling towards the world. It is commonly said that the only one of the writer's novels which contains a sufficient amount of charity and sweetness is *Humphry Clinker*. The statement

is not quite true. *Greaves* is not so strikingly amiable as Smollett's masterpiece only because it is not so striking in any of its excellences; their lines are always a little blurred. Still, it shows that ten years before *Clinker*, Smollett had learned to combine the contradictory elements of life in something like their right proportions. If obscenity and ferocity are found in his fourth novel, they are no longer found in a disproportionate degree.

There is little more to say of *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, except in the way of literary history. The given name of the hero may or may not be significant. It is safe to say that if a Sir Launcelot had appeared in fiction one or two generations earlier, had the fact been recognised (which is not indubitable) that he bore the name of the most celebrated knight of later Arthurian romance, he would have been nothing but a burlesque figure. But in 1760, literary taste was changing. Romanticism in literature had begun to come to the front again, as Smollett had already shown by his romantic leanings in *Count Fathom*. With it there came interest in the Middle Ages and in the most popular fiction of the Middle Ages, the "greatest of all poetic subjects," according to Tennyson, the stories of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, which, for the better part of a century, had been deposed from their old-time place of honour. These stories, however, were as yet so imperfectly known — and only to a few — that the most to be said is that some connection between their reviving popu-

larity and the name of Smollett's knight-errant hero is not impossible.

Apart from this, *Sir Launcelot Greaves* is interesting historically as ending Smollett's comparatively long silence in novel-writing after the publication of *Fathom* in 1753. His next work was the translation of *Don Quixote*, which he completed in 1755, and which may first have suggested the idea of an English knight, somewhat after the pattern of the Spanish. Be that as it may, before developing the idea, Smollett busied himself with his *Complete History of England*, and with the comedy, *The Reprisal: or the Tars of Old England*, a successful play which at last brought about a reconciliation with his old enemy, Garrick. Two years later, in 1759, as editor of the *Critical Review*, Smollett was led into a criticism of Admiral Knowles's conduct that was judged libellous enough to give its author three months in the King's Bench prison, during which time, it has been conjectured, he began to mature his plans for the English Quixote. The result was that, in 1760 and 1761, *Sir Launcelot Greaves* came out in various numbers of the *British Magazine*. Scott has given his authority to the statement that Smollett wrote many of the instalments in great haste, sometimes, during a visit in Berwickshire, dashing off the necessary amount of manuscript in an hour or so just before the departure of the post. If the story is true, it adds its testimony to that of his works to the author's extraordinarily facile pen. Finally, in 1762, the novel thus hurried off in instalments appeared as a whole. This method of its introduc-

tion to the public gives *Sir Launcelot Greaves* still another claim to interest. It is one of the earliest English novels, indeed the earliest from the pen of a great writer, published in serial form.

G. H. MAYNADIER.

THE ADVENTURES
OF
SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES

CHAPTER ONE

IN WHICH CERTAIN PERSONAGES OF THIS DELIGHTFUL HISTORY ARE INTRODUCED TO THE READER'S ACQUAINTANCE.

IT was on the great northern road from York to London, about the beginning of the month of October, and the hour of eight in the evening, that four travellers were, by a violent shower of rain, driven for shelter into a little public-house on the side of the highway, distinguished by a sign which was said to exhibit the figure of a black lion. The kitchen, in which they assembled, was the only room for entertainment in the house, paved with red bricks, remarkably clean, furnished with three or four Windsor chairs, adorned with shining plates of pewter, and copper saucepans, nicely scoured, that even dazzled the eyes of the beholder; while a cheerful fire of sea-coal blazed in the chimney. Three of the travellers, who arrived on horseback, having seen their cattle properly accommodated in the stable, agreed to pass the time, until the weather should clear up, over a bowl of rumbo, which was accordingly prepared. But the fourth, refusing to

join their company, took his station at the opposite side of the chimney, and called for a pint of two-penny, with which he indulged himself apart. At a little distance, on his left hand, there was another group, consisting of the landlady, a decent widow, her two daughters, the elder of whom seemed to be about the age of fifteen, and a country lad, who served both as waiter and ostler.

The social triumvirate was composed of Mr. Fillet, a country practitioner in surgery and midwifery, Captain Crowe, and his nephew Mr. Thomas Clarke, an attorney. Fillet was a man of some education, and a great deal of experience, shrewd, sly, and sensible. Captain Crowe had commanded a merchant ship in the Mediterranean trade for many years, and saved some money by dint of frugality and traffic. He was an excellent seaman, brave, active, friendly in his way, and scrupulously honest; but as little acquainted with the world as a sucking child; whimsical, impatient, and so impetuous, that he could not help breaking in upon the conversation, whatever it might be, with repeated interruptions, that seemed to burst from him by involuntary impulse. When he himself attempted to speak he never finished his period; but made such a number of abrupt transitions, that his discourse seemed to be an unconnected series of unfinished sentences, the meaning of which it was not easy to decipher.

His nephew, Tom Clarke, was a young fellow, whose goodness of heart even the exercise of his profession had not been able to corrupt. Before strangers he never owned himself an attorney without blushing,

though he had no reason to blush for his own practice, for he constantly refused to engage in the cause of any client whose character was equivocal, and was never known to act with such industry as when concerned for the widow and orphan, or any other object that sued *in formâ pauperis*. Indeed, he was so replete with human kindness, that as often as an affecting story or circumstance was told in his hearing, it overflowed at his eyes. Being of a warm complexion, he was very susceptible of passion, and somewhat libertine in his amours. In other respects, he piqued himself on understanding the practice of the courts, and in private company he took pleasure in laying down the law; but he was an indifferent orator, and tediously circumstantial in his explanations. His stature was rather diminutive; but, upon the whole, he had some title to the character of a pretty, dapper, little fellow.

The solitary guest had something very forbidding in his aspect, which was contracted by an habitual frown. His eyes were small and red, and so deep set in the sockets, that each appeared like the unextinguished snuff of a farthing candle, gleaming through the horn of a dark lanthorn. His nostrils were elevated in scorn, as if his sense of smelling had been perpetually offended by some unsavoury odour; and he looked as if he wanted to shrink within himself from the impertinence of society. He wore a black periwig as straight as the pinions of a raven, and this was covered with a hat flapped, and fastened to his head by a speckled handkerchief tied under his chin. He was wrapped in a greatcoat of brown

frieze, under which he seemed to conceal a small bundle. His name was Ferret, and his character distinguished by three peculiarities. He was never seen to smile; he was never heard to speak in praise of any person whatsoever; and he was never known to give a direct answer to any question that was asked; but seemed, on all occasions, to be actuated by the most perverse spirit of contradiction.

Captain Crowe, having remarked that it was squally weather, asked how far it was to the next market town; and understanding that the distance was not less than six miles, said he had a good mind to come to an anchor for the night, if so be as he could have a tolerable *berth* in this here harbour. Mr. Fillet, perceiving by his style that he was a seafaring gentleman, observed that their landlady was not used to lodge such company; and expressed some surprise that he, who had no doubt endured so many storms and hardships at sea, should think much of travelling five or six miles a-horseback by moonlight. "For my part," said he, "I ride in all weathers, and at all hours, without minding cold, wet, wind, or darkness. My constitution is so case-hardened that I believe I could live all the year at Spitzbergen. With respect to this road, I know every foot of it so exactly, that I'll engage to travel forty miles upon it blindfold, without making one false step; and if you have faith enough to put yourselves under my auspices, I will conduct you safe to an elegant inn, where you will meet with the best accommodation." "Thank you, brother," replied the captain, "we are much beholden to you for your courteous offer; but,

howsomever, you must not think I mind foul weather more than my neighbours. I have worked hard aloft and alow in many a taut gale; but this here is the case, d' ye see; we have run down a long day's reckoning; our beasts have had a hard spell; and as for my own hap, brother, I doubt my bottom-planks have lost some of their sheathing, being as how I a'n't used to that kind of scrubbing."

The doctor, who had practised aboard a man-of-war in his youth, and was perfectly well acquainted with the captain's dialect, assured him that if his bottom was damaged he would *new pay* it with an excellent salve, which he always carried about him to guard against such accidents on the road. But Tom Clarke, who seemed to have cast the eyes of affection upon the landlady's eldest daughter, Dolly, objected to their proceeding farther without rest and refreshment, as they had already travelled fifty miles since morning; and he was sure his uncle must be fatigued both in mind and body, from vexation, as well as from hard exercise, to which he had not been accustomed. Fillet then desisted, saying, he was sorry to find the captain had any cause of vexation; but he hoped it was not an incurable evil. This expression was accompanied with a look of curiosity, which Mr. Clarke was glad of an occasion to gratify; for, as we have hinted above, he was a very communicative gentleman, and the affair which now lay upon his stomach interested him nearly.

"I 'll assure you, sir," said he, "this here gentleman, Captain Crowe, who is my mother's own brother, has been cruelly used by some of his rela-

tions. He bears as good a character as any captain of a ship on the Royal Exchange, and has undergone a variety of hardships at sea. What d'ye think, now, of his bursting all his sinews, and making his eyes start out of his head, in pulling his ship off a rock, whereby he saved to his owners"— Here he was interrupted by the captain, who exclaimed, "Belay, Tom, belay; pr'ythee, don't veer out such a deal of jaw. Clap a stopper on thy cable and bring thyself up, my lad — what a deal of stuff thou has pumped up concerning bursting and starting, and pulling ships; Laud have mercy upon us! — look ye here, brother — look ye here — mind these poor crippled joints; two fingers on the starboard, and three on the larboard hand; crooked, d'ye see, like the knees of a bilander. I'll tell you what, brother, you seem to be a — ship deep laden — rich cargo — current setting into the bay — hard gale — lee shore — all hands in the boat — tow round the headland — self pulling for dear blood, against the whole crew — snap go the finger-braces — crack went the eye-blocks. Bounce daylight — flash starlight — down I foundered, dark as hell — whiz went my ears, and my head spun like a whirligig. That don't signify — I'm a Yorkshire boy, as the saying is — all my life at sea, brother, by reason of an old grandmother and maiden aunt, a couple of old stinking — kept me these forty years out of my grandfather's estate. Hearing as how they had taken their departure, came ashore, hired horses, and clapped on all my canvas, steering to the northward, to take possession of my — But it don't signify

talking — these two old piratical — had held a palaver with a lawyer — an attorney, Tom, d'ye mind me, an attorney — and by his assistance hove me out of my inheritance. That is all, brother — hove me out of five hundred pounds a year — that's all — what signifies — but such windfalls we don't every day pick up along shore. Fill about, brother — yes, by the L—d! those two smuggling harridans, with the assistance of an attorney — an attorney, Tom — hove me out of five hundred a year." "Yes, indeed, sir," added Mr. Clarke, "those two malicious old women docked the intail, and left the estate to an alien."

Here Mr. Ferret thought proper to intermingle in the conversation with a "*Pish*, what dost talk of docking the intail? Dost not know that by the statute Westm. 2. 13 Ed. the will and intention of the donor must be fulfilled, and the tenant in *tail* shall not alien after issue had, or before." "Give me leave, sir," replied Tom, "I presume you are a practitioner in the law. Now, you know, that in the case of a contingent *remainder*, the intail may be destroyed by levying a fine, and suffering a recovery, or otherwise destroying the particular estate, before the contingency happens. If *feoffees*, who possess an estate only during the life of a son, where divers *remainders* are limited over, make a *feoffment* in fee to him, by the *feoffment*, all the future *remainders* are destroyed. Indeed, a person in *remainder* may have a writ of intrusion, if any do intrude after the death of a tenant for life, and the writ *ex gravi querela* lies to execute a device in *remainder* after the

death of a tenant in tail without issue." "Spoke like a true disciple of Geber," cries Ferret. "No, sir," replied Mr. Clarke, "Counsellor Caper is in the conveyancing way — I was clerk to Serjeant Croker." "Ay, now you may set up for yourself," resumed the other; "for you can prate as unintelligibly as the best of them."

"Perhaps," said Tom, "I do not make myself understood; if so be as how that is the case, let us change the position, and suppose that this here case is a *tail after a possibility of issue extinct.* If a tenant in *tail* after a possibility make a *feoffment* of his land, he in reversion may enter for the forfeiture. Then we must make a distinction between *general tail* and *special tail.* It is the word *body* that makes the *intail:* there must be a *body* in the *tail,* devised to heirs male or female, otherwise it is a fee-simple, because it is not limited of what *body.* Thus a corporation cannot be seized in *tail.* For example, here is a young woman — What is your name, my dear?" "Dolly," answered the daughter, with a curtsey. "Here's Dolly — I seize Dolly in *tail* — Dolly, I seize you in *tail*" — "Sha't then," cried Dolly, pouting. "I am seized of land in fee — I settle on Dolly in *tail.*"

Dolly, who did not comprehend the nature of the illustration, understood him in a literal sense, and, in a whimpering tone, exclaimed, "Sha't then, I tell thee, cursed tuoad!" Tom, however, was so transported with his subject, that he took no notice of poor Dolly's mistake, but proceeded in his harangue upon the different kinds of *tails, remainders,* and

seisins, when he was interrupted by a noise that alarmed the whole company. The rain had been succeeded by a storm of wind that howled around the house with the most savage impetuosity, and the heavens were overcast in such a manner that not one star appeared, so that all without was darkness and uproar. This aggravated the horror of divers loud screams, which even the noise of the blast could not exclude from the ears of our astonished travellers. Captain Crowe called out, "Avast, avast!" Tom Clarke sat silent, staring wildly, with his mouth still open; the surgeon himself seemed startled, and Ferret's countenance betrayed evident marks of confusion. The ostler moved nearer the chimney, and the good woman of the house, with her two daughters, crept closer to the company.

After some pause, the captain starting up, "These," said he, "be signals of distress. Some poor souls in danger of foundering — let us bear up a-head, and see if we can give them any assistance." The landlady begged him, for Christ's sake, not to think of going out, for it was a spirit that would lead him astray into fens and rivers, and certainly do him a mischief. Crowe seemed to be staggered by this remonstrance, which his nephew reinforced, observing, that it might be a stratagem of rogues to decoy them into the fields, that they might rob them under the cloud of night. Thus exhorted, he resumed his seat, and Mr. Ferret began to make very severe strictures upon the folly and fear of those who believed and trembled at the visitation of spirits, ghosts, and goblins. He said he would en-

gage with twelve pennyworth of phosphorus to frighten a whole parish out of their senses; then he expatiated on the pusillanimity of the nation in general, ridiculed the militia, censured the government, and dropped some hints about a change of hands, which the captain could not, and the doctor would not, comprehend.

Tom Clarke, from the freedom of his discourse, concluded he was a ministerial spy, and communicated his opinion to his uncle in a whisper, while this misanthrope continued to pour forth his invectives with a fluency peculiar to himself. The truth is, Mr. Ferret had been a party writer, not from principle, but employment, and had felt the rod of power, in order to avoid a second exertion of which, he now found it convenient to skulk about in the country, for he had received intimation of a warrant from the secretary of state, who wanted to be better acquainted with his person. Notwithstanding the ticklish nature of his situation, it was become so habitual to him to think and speak in a certain manner, that even before strangers whose principles and connexions he could not possibly know, he hardly ever opened his mouth, without uttering some direct or implied sarcasm against the government.

He had already proceeded a considerable way in demonstrating, that the nation was bankrupt and beggared, and that those who stood at the helm were steering full into the gulf of inevitable destruction, when his lecture was suddenly suspended by a violent knocking at the door, which threatened the whole house with inevitable demolition. Captain

Crowe, believing they should be instantly boarded, unsheathed his hanger, and stood in a posture of defence. Mr. Fillet armed himself with the poker, which happened to be red hot; the ostler pulled down a rusty firelock, that hung by the roof, over a flitch of bacon. Tom Clarke perceiving the landlady and her children distracted with terror, conducted them, out of mere compassion, below stairs into the cellar; and as for Mr. Ferret, he prudently withdrew into an adjoining pantry.

But as a personage of great importance in this entertaining history was forced to remain some time at the door before he could gain admittance, so must the reader wait with patience for the next chapter, in which he will see the cause of this disturbance explained much to his comfort and edification.

CHAPTER TWO

IN WHICH THE HERO OF THESE ADVENTURES MAKES HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE OF ACTION.

THE outward door of the Black Lion had already sustained two dreadful shocks, but at the third it flew open, and in stalked an apparition that smote the hearts of our travellers with fear and trepidation. It was the figure of a man armed cap-a-pee, bearing on his shoulders a bundle dropping with water, which afterwards appeared to be the body of a man that seemed to have been drowned, and fished up from the bottom of the neighbouring river.

Having deposited his burden carefully on the floor, he addressed himself to the company in these words: "Be not surprised, good people, at this unusual appearance, which I shall take an opportunity to explain, and forgive the rude and boisterous manner in which I have demanded, and indeed forced admittance; the violence of my intrusion was the effect of necessity. In crossing the river, my squire and his horse were swept away by the stream, and, with some difficulty, I have been able to drag him ashore, though I am afraid my assistance reached him too late, for since I brought him to land he has given no signs of life."

Here he was interrupted by a groan, which issued from the chest of the squire, and terrified the spectators as much as it comforted the master. After some recollection, Mr. Fillet began to undress the body, which was laid in a blanket on the floor, and rolled from side to side by his direction. A considerable quantity of water being discharged from the mouth of this unfortunate squire, he uttered a hideous roar, and, opening his eyes, stared wildly around. Then the surgeon undertook for his recovery; and his master went forth with the ostler in quest of the horses, which he had left by the side of the river. His back was no sooner turned, than Ferret, who had been peeping from behind the pantry-door, ventured to rejoin the company; pronouncing with a smile, or rather grin, of contempt, "Hey-day! what precious mummery is this? What, are we to have the farce of Hamlet's ghost?" "Adzooks," cried the captain, "My kinsman Tom has dropped astern — hope in God a-has not bulged to, and gone to bottom." "Pish," exclaimed the misanthrope, "there 's no danger; the young lawyer is only seizing Dolly in tail."

Certain it is, Dolly squeaked at that instant in the cellar; and Clarke appearing soon after in some confusion, declared she had been frightened by a flash of lightning. But this assertion was not confirmed by the young lady herself, who eyed him with a sullen regard, indicating displeasure, though not indifference; and when questioned by her mother, replied, "A doan't maind what a-says, so a doan't, vor all his goalden jacket, then."

In the meantime the surgeon had performed the operation of phlebotomy on the squire, who was lifted into a chair, and supported by the landlady for that purpose; but he had not as yet given any sign of having retrieved the use of his senses. And here Mr. Fillet could not help contemplating, with surprise, the strange figure and accoutrements of his patient, who seemed in age to be turned of fifty. His stature was below the middle size; he was thick, squat, and brawny, with a small protuberance on one shoulder, and a prominent belly, which, in consequence of the water he had swallowed, now strutted beyond its usual dimensions. His forehead was remarkably convex, and so very low, that his black bushy hair descended within an inch of his nose; but this did not conceal the wrinkles of his front, which were manifold. His small glimmering eyes resembled those of the Hampshire porker, that turns up the soil with his projecting snout. His cheeks were shrivelled and puckered at the corners, like the seams of a regimental coat as it comes from the hands of the contractor. His nose bore a strong analogy in shape to a tennis-ball, and in colour to a mulberry; for all the water of the river had not been able to quench the natural fire of that feature. His upper jaw was furnished with two long white sharp-pointed teeth or fangs, such as the reader may have observed in the chaps of a wolf, or full-grown mastiff, and an anatomist would describe as a preternatural elongation of the *dentes canini*. His chin was so long, so peaked, and incurvated, as to form in profile, with his impending forehead, the exact resemblance of a

moon in the first quarter. With respect to his equipage, he had a leathern cap upon his head, faced like those worn by marines, and exhibiting in embroidery, the figure of a crescent. His coat was of white cloth, faced with black, and cut in a very antique fashion; and, in lieu of a waistcoat, he wore a buff jerkin. His feet were cased with loose buskins, which, though they rose almost to his knee, could not hide that curvature, known by the appellation of bandy legs. A large string of bandaliers garnished a broad belt that graced his shoulders, from whence depended an instrument of war, which was something between a back-sword and a cutlass; and a case of pistols were stuck in his girdle.

Such was the figure which the whole company now surveyed with admiration. After some pause, he seemed to recover his recollection. He rolled about his eyes around, and, attentively surveying every individual, exclaimed, in a strange tone, "Bodikins! where 's Gilbert?" This interrogation did not savour much of sanity, especially when accompanied with a wild stare, which is generally interpreted as a sure sign of a disturbed understanding. Nevertheless, the surgeon endeavoured to assist his recollection. "Come," said he, "have a good heart. — How dost do, friend?" "Do!" replied the squire, "do as well as I can. — That 's a lie too; I might have done better. I had no business to be here." "You ought to thank God and your master," resumed the surgeon, "for the providential escape you have had." "Thank my master!" cried the squire, "thank the devil! Go and teach your grannum to crack filberds.

I know who I'm bound to pray for, and who I ought to curse the longest day I have to live."

Here the captain interposing, "Nay, brother," said he, "you are bound to pray for this here gentleman as your sheet-anchor; for, if so be as he had not cleared your stowage of the water you had taken in at your upper works, and lightened your veins, d'ye see, by taking away some of your blood, adad! you had driven before the gale, and never been brought up in this world again, d'ye see." "What, then you would persuade me," replied the patient, "that the only way to save my life was to shed my precious blood? Look ye, friend, it shall not be lost blood to me. — I take you all to witness, that there surgeon, or apothecary, or farrier, or dog-doctor, or whatsoever he may be, has robbed me of the balsam of life. — He has not left so much blood in my body as would fatten a starved flea. — O! that there was a lawyer here to serve him with a *siserari*."

Then fixing his eyes upon Ferret, he proceeded: "An't you a limb of the law, friend? — No, I cry you mercy, you look more like a showman or a conjurer." — Ferret, nettled at this address, answered, "It would be well for you, that I could conjure a little common sense into that numskull of yours." "If I want that commodity," rejoined the squire, "I must go to another market, I trow. — You legerdemain men be more like to conjure the money from our pockets than sense into our skulls. Vor my own part, I was once cheated of vorty good shillings by one of your broother cups and balls." In all probability he would have descended to particulars, had

he not been seized with a return of his nausea, which obliged him to call for a bumper of brandy. This remedy being swallowed, the tumult in his stomach subsided. He desired he might be put to bed without delay, and that half a dozen eggs and a pound of bacon might, in a couple of hours, be dressed for his supper.

He was accordingly led off the scene by the landlady and her daughter; and Mr. Ferret had just time to observe the fellow was a composition, in which he did not know whether knave or fool most predominated, when the master returned from the stable. He had taken off his helmet, and now displayed a very engaging countenance. His age did not seem to exceed thirty. He was tall, and seemingly robust; his face long and oval, his nose aquiline, his mouth furnished with a set of elegant teeth, white as the drifted snow, his complexion clear, and his aspect noble. His chestnut hair loosely flowed in short natural curls; and his grey eyes shone with such vivacity, as plainly showed that his reason was a little discomposed. Such an appearance prepossessed the greater part of the company in his favour. He bowed round with the most polite and affable address; inquired about his squire, and, being informed of the pains Mr. Fillet had taken for his recovery, insisted upon that gentleman's accepting a handsome gratuity. Then, in consideration of the cold bath he had undergone, he was prevailed upon to take the post of honour; namely, the great chair fronting the fire, which was reinforced with a billet of wood for his comfort and convenience.

Perceiving his fellow-travellers, either overawed into silence by his presence, or struck dumb with admiration at his equipage, he accosted them in these words, while an agreeable smile dimpled on his cheek: —

"The good company wonders, no doubt, to see a man cased in armour, such as hath been for above a whole century disused in this and every other country of Europe; and perhaps they will be still more surprised, when they hear that man profess himself a novitiate of that military order, which hath of old been distinguished in Great Britain, as well as through all Christendom, by the name of knights-errant. Yes, gentlemen, in that painful and thorny path of toil and danger I have begun my career, a candidate for honest fame; determined, as far as in me lies, to honour and assert the efforts of virtue; to combat vice in all her forms, redress injuries, chastise oppression, protect the helpless and forlorn, relieve the indigent, exert my best endeavours in the cause of innocence and beauty, and dedicate my talents, such as they are, to the service of my country."

"What!" said Ferret, "you set up for a modern Don Quixote? The scheme is rather too stale and extravagant. What was a humorous romance and well-timed satire in Spain near two hundred years ago, will make but a sorry jest, and appear equally insipid and absurd when really acted from affectation, at this time of day, in a country like England."

The knight, eyeing this censor with a look of disdain, replied, in a solemn, lofty tone: "He that from affectation imitates the extravagancies recorded of

Don Quixote, is an impostor equally wicked and contemptible. He that counterfeits madness, unless he dissembles, like the elder Brutus, for some virtuous purpose, not only debases his own soul, but acts as a traitor to Heaven, by denying the divinity that is within him. I am neither an affected imitator of Don Quixote, nor, as I trust in Heaven, visited by that spirit of lunacy so admirably displayed in the fictitious character exhibited by the inimitable Cervantes. I have not yet encountered a windmill for a giant, nor mistaken this public-house for a magnificent castle; neither do I believe this gentleman to be the constable; nor that worthy practitioner to be Master Elizabat, the surgeon recorded in Amadis de Gaul; nor you to be the enchanter Alquife, nor any other sage of history or romance; I see and distinguish objects as they are discerned and described by other men. I reason without prejudice, can endure contradiction, and, as the company perceives, even bear impertinent censure without passion or resentment. I quarrel with none but the foes of virtue and decorum, against whom I have declared perpetual war, and them I will everywhere attack as the natural enemies of mankind."

"But that war," said the cynic, "may soon be brought to a conclusion, and your adventures close in Bridewell, provided you meet with some determined constable, who will seize your worship as a vagrant, according to the statute." "Heaven and earth!" cried the stranger, starting up, and laying his hand on his sword, "do I live to hear myself insulted with such an opprobrious epithet,

and refrain from trampling into dust the insolent calumniator?"

The tone in which these words were pronounced, and the indignation that flashed from the eyes of the speaker, intimidated every individual of the society, and reduced Ferret to a temporary privation of all his faculties. His eyes retired within their sockets; his complexion, which was naturally of a copper hue, now shifted to a leaden colour; his teeth began to chatter; and all his limbs were agitated by a sudden palsy. The knight observed his condition, and resumed his seat, saying, "I was to blame; my vengeance must be reserved for very different objects. Friend, you have nothing to fear — the sudden gust of passion is now blown over. Recollect yourself, and I will reason calmly on the observation you have made."

This was a very seasonable declaration to Mr. Ferret, who opened his eyes, and wiped his forehead, while the other proceeded in these terms: "You say I am in danger of being apprehended as a vagrant. I am not so ignorant of the laws of my country, but that I know the description of those who fall within the legal meaning of this odious term. You must give me leave to inform you, friend, that I am neither bearward, fencer, stroller, gipsy, mountebank, nor mendicant; nor do I practise subtle craft, to deceive and impose upon the king's lieges; nor can I be held as an idle disorderly person, travelling from place to place, collecting monies by virtue of counterfeited passes, briefs, and other false pretences; in what respect, therefore, am I to be deemed a vagrant? Answer boldly without fear or scruple."

To this interrogation the misanthrope replied, with a faltering accent, "If not a vagrant, you incur the penalty for riding armed in affray of the peace." "But, instead of riding armed in affray of the peace," resumed the other, "I ride in preservation of the peace; and gentlemen are allowed by the law to wear armour for their defence. Some ride with blunderbusses, some with pistols, some with swords, according to their various inclinations. Mine is to wear the armour of my forefathers. Perhaps I use them for exercise, in order to accustom myself to fatigue, and strengthen my constitution; perhaps I assume them for a frolic."

"But if you swagger, armed and in disguise, assault me on the highway, or put me in bodily fear for the sake of the jest, the law will punish you in earnest," cried the other. "But my intention," answered the knight, "is carefully to avoid all those occasions of offence." "Then," said Ferret, "you may go unarmed, like other sober people." "Not so," answered the knight; "as I propose to travel all times, and in all places, mine armour may guard me against the attempts of treachery; it may defend me in combat against odds, should I be assaulted by a multitude, or have occasion to bring malefactors to justice."

"What, then," exclaimed the philosopher, "you intend to co-operate with the honourable fraternity of thief-takers?" "I do purpose," said the youth, eyeing him with a look of ineffable contempt, "to act as a coadjutator to the law, and even to remedy evils which the law cannot reach; to detect fraud and treason, abase insolence, mortify pride, dis-

courage slander, disgrace immodesty, and stigmatise ingratitude, but the infamous part of a thief-catcher's character I disclaim. I neither associate with robbers and pickpockets, knowing them to be such, that, in being intrusted with their secrets, I may the more effectually betray them; nor shall I ever pocket the reward granted by the legislature to those by whom robbers are brought to conviction; but I shall always think it my duty to rid my country of that pernicious vermin, which prey upon the bowels of the commonwealth — not but that an incorporated company of licensed thieves might, under proper regulations, be of service to the community."

Ferret, emboldened by the passive tameness with which the stranger bore his last reflection, began to think he had nothing of Hector but his outside, and gave a loose to all the acrimony of his party rancour. Hearing the knight mention a company of licensed thieves, "What else," cried he, "is the majority of the nation? What is your standing army at home, that eat up their fellow-subjects? What are your mercenaries abroad, whom you hire to fight their own quarrels? What is your militia, that wise measure of a sagacious ministry, but a larger gang of petty thieves, who steal sheep and poultry through mere idleness; and were they confronted with an enemy, would steal themselves away? What is your . . . but a knot of thieves, who pillage the nation under colour of law, and enrich themselves with the wreck of their country? When you consider the enormous debt of above an hundred millions, the intolerable load of taxes and impositions under which we groan,

and the manner in which that burden is yearly accumulating, to support two German electorates, without our receiving anything in return, but the shows of triumph and shadows of conquest; — I say, when you reflect on these circumstances, and at the same time behold our cities filled with bankrupts, and our country with beggars, can you be so infatuated as to deny that the ministry is mad, or worse than mad — our wealth exhausted, our people miserable, our credit blasted, and our state on the brink of perdition? This prospect, indeed, will make the fainter impression, if we recollect that we ourselves are a pack of such profligate, corrupted, pusillanimous rascals, as deserve no salvation."

The stranger, raising his voice to a loud tone, replied, "Such, indeed, are the insinuations, equally false and insidious, with which the desperate emissaries of a party endeavour to poison the minds of his majesty's subjects, in defiance of common honesty and common sense. But he must be blind to all perception, and dead to candour, who does not see and own that we are involved in a just and necessary war, which has been maintained on truly British principles, prosecuted with vigour, and crowned with success; that our taxes are easy, in proportion to our wealth; that our conquests are equally glorious and important; that our commerce flourishes, our people are happy, and our enemies reduced to despair. Is there a man who boasts a British heart, that repines at the success and prosperity of his country? Such there are, (Oh, shame to patriotism, and reproach to Great Britain!) who act as the emissaries of France,

both in word and writing; who exaggerate our necessary burdens, magnify our dangers, extol the power of our enemies, deride our victories, extenuate our conquests, condemn the measures of our government, and scatter the seeds of dissatisfaction through the land. Such domestic traitors are doubly the objects of detestation; — first, in perverting truth; and, secondly, in propagating falsehood, to the prejudice of that community of which they have professed themselves members. One of these is well known by the name of Ferret, an old, rancorous, incorrigible instrument of sedition. Happy it is for him that he has never fallen in my way; for, notwithstanding the maxims of forbearance which I have adopted, the indignation which the character of that caitiff inspires, would probably impel me to some act of violence, and I should crush him like an ungrateful viper, that gnawed the bosom which warmed it into life!"

These last words were pronounced with a wildness of look, that even bordered upon frenzy. The misanthrope once more retired to the pantry for shelter, and the rest of the guests were evidently disconcerted.

Mr. Fillet, in order to change the conversation, which was likely to produce serious consequences, expressed uncommon satisfaction at the remarks which the knight had made, signified his approbation of the honourable office he had undertaken, declared himself happy in having seen such an accomplished cavalier, and observed, that nothing was wanting to render him a complete knight-errant, but some celebrated beauty, the mistress of his heart,

whose idea might animate his breast, and strengthen his arm to the utmost exertion of valour. He added, that love was the soul of chivalry.

The stranger started at this discourse. He turned his eyes on the surgeon with a fixed regard; his countenance changed; a torrent of tears gushed down his cheeks; his head sunk upon his bosom; he heaved a profound sigh, and remained in silence with all the external marks of unutterable sorrow. The company were, in some measure, infected by his despondence, concerning the cause of which, however, they would not venture to inquire.

By this time the landlady, having disposed of the squire, desired to know, with many curtsies, if his honour would not choose to put off his wet garments, assuring him, that she had a very good feather bed at his service, upon which many gentlevolks of the virst quality had lain, that the sheets were well aired, and that Dolly would warm them for his worship with a pan of coals. This hospitable offer being repeated, he seemed to wake from a trance of grief, arose from his seat, and, bowing courteously to the company, withdrew.

Captain Crowe, whose faculty of speech had been all this time absorbed in amazement, now broke into the conversation with a volley of interjections. "Split my snatchblock! — Odd's firkin! — Splice my old shoes! — I have sailed the salt seas, brother, since I was no higher than the Triton's taffrel — east, west, north, and south, as the saying is — Blacks, Indians, Moors, Morattos, and Seapoys; — but, smite my timbers! such a man of war" —

Here he was interrupted by his nephew, Tom Clarke, who had disappeared at the knight's first entrance, and now produced himself with an eagerness in his look, while the tears stared in his eyes. — "Lord bless my soul!" cried he, "I know that gentleman, and his servant, as well as I know my own father! — I am his own godson, uncle; he stood for me when he was a boy — yes, indeed, sir, my father was steward to the estate — I may say I was bred up in the family of Sir Everhard Greaves, who has been dead these two years — this is the only son, Sir Launcelot; the best-natured, worthy, generous gentleman — I care not who knows it. I love him as well as if he was my own flesh and blood" —

At this period, Tom, whose heart was of the melting mood, began to sob and weep plenteously, from pure affection. Crowe, who was not very subject to these tendernesses, d—ed him for a chicken-hearted lubber; repeating, with much peevishness, "What dost cry for? what dost cry for, noddy?" The surgeon, impatient to know the story of Sir Launcelot, which he had heard imperfectly recounted, begged that Mr. Clarke would compose himself, and relate it as circumstantially as his memory would retain the particulars; and Tom, wiping his eyes, promised to give him that satisfaction; which the reader, if he be so minded, may partake in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

WHICH THE READER, ON PERUSAL, MAY WISH WERE *CHAPTER THE LAST.*

THE doctor prescribed a *repetatur* of the julep, and mixed the ingredients, *secundum artem;* Tom Clarke hemmed thrice, to clear his pipes; while the rest of the company, including Dolly and her mother, who had by this time administered to the knight, composed themselves into earnest and hushed attention. Then the young lawyer began his narrative to this effect: —

"I tell ye what, gemmen, I don't pretend in this here case to flourish and harangue like a — having never been called to — but what of that, d' ye see? perhaps I may know as much as — facts are facts, as the saying is. — I shall tell, repeat, and relate a plain story — matters of fact, d' ye see, without rhetoric, oratory, ornament, or embellishment; without repetition, tautology, circumlocution, or going about the bush; facts which I shall aver, partly on the testimony of my own knowledge, and partly from the information of responsible evidences of good repute and credit, any circumstance known to the contrary notwithstanding. — For as the law saith, if so be as how there is *an exception* to evidence, that

exception is in its nature but a denial of what is taken to be good by the other party, and *exceptio in non exceptis, firmat regulam*, d' ye see. — But howsomever, in regard to this here affair, we need not be so scrupulous as if we were pleading before a judge *sedente curia.*"

Ferret, whose curiosity was rather more eager than that of any other person in this audience, being provoked by this preamble, dashed the pipe he had just filled in pieces against the grate; and after having pronounced the interjection *pish!* with an acrimony of aspect altogether peculiar to himself, "If," said he, "impertinence and folly were felony by the statute, there would be no warrant of unexceptionable evidence to hang such an eternal babbler." "Anan, babbler!" cried Tom, reddening with passion, and starting up; "I'd have you to know, sir, that I can bite as well as babble; and that, if I am so minded, I can run upon the foot after my game without being in fault, as the saying is; and, which is more, I can shake an old fox by the collar."

How far this young lawyer might have proceeded to prove himself staunch on the person of the misanthrope, if he had not been prevented, we shall not determine; but the whole company were alarmed at his looks and expressions. Dolly's rosy cheeks assumed an ash colour, while she ran between the disputants, crying, "Naay, naay — vor the love of God doan't then, doan't then!" But Captain Crowe exerted a parental authority over his nephew, saying, "Avast, Tom, avast! — Snug 's the word — we'll have no boarding, d' ye see. — Haul forward thy chair

again, take thy berth, and proceed with thy story in a direct course, without yawing like a Dutch yanky."

Tom, thus tutored, recollected himself, resumed his seat, and, after some pause, plunged at once into the current of narration. "I told you before, gemmen, that the gentleman in armour was the only son of Sir Everhard Greaves, who possessed a free estate of five thousand a year in our country, and was respected by all his neighbours as much for his personal merit as for his family fortune. With respect to his son Launcelot, whom you have seen, I can remember nothing until he returned from the university, about the age of seventeen, and then I myself was not more than ten years old. The young gemman was at that time in mourning for his mother; though, God knows, Sir Everhard had more cause to rejoice than to be afflicted at her death: — for, among friends" (here he lowered his voice, and looked round the kitchen), "she was very whimsical, expensive, ill-tempered, and, I'm afraid, a little — upon the — flightly order — a little touched or so; — but mum for that — the lady is now dead; and it is my maxim, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. The young squire was even then very handsome, and looked remarkably well in his weepers; but he had an awkward air and shambling gait, stooped mortally, and was so shy and silent that he would not look a stranger in the face, nor open his mouth before company. Whenever he spied a horse or carriage at the gate, he would make his escape into the garden, and from thence into the park;

where many is the good time and often he has been found sitting under a tree, with a book in his hand, reading Greek, Latin, and other foreign linguas.

"Sir Everhard himself was no great scholar, and my father had forgot his classical learning; and so the rector of the parish was desired to examine young Launcelot. It was a long time before he found an opportunity; the squire always gave him the slip. — At length the parson catched him in bed of a morning, and, locking the door, to it they went tooth and nail. What passed betwixt them the Lord in heaven knows; but when the doctor came forth, he looked wild and haggard as if he had seen a ghost, his face as white as paper, and his lips trembling like an aspen-leaf. 'Parson,' said the knight, 'what is the matter? — how dost find my son? I hope he won't turn out a ninny, and disgrace his family?' The doctor, wiping the sweat from his forehead, replied, with some hesitation, 'he could not tell — he hoped the best — the squire was to be sure a very extraordinary young gentleman.' — But the father urging him to give an explicit answer, he frankly declared, that, in his opinion, the son would turn out either a mirror of wisdom, or a monument of folly; for his genius and disposition were altogether preternatural. The knight was sorely vexed at this declaration, and signified his displeasure by saying, the doctor, like a true priest, dealt in mysteries and oracles, that would admit of different and indeed contrary interpretations. He afterwards consulted my father, who had served as a steward upon the estate for above thirty

years, and acquired a considerable share of his favour 'Will Clarke,' said he, with tears in his eyes, 'what shall I do with this unfortunate lad? I would to God he had never been born; for I fear he will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. When I am gone, he will throw away the estate, and bring himself to infamy and ruin, by keeping company with rooks and beggars. — O Will! I could forgive extravagance in a young man; but it breaks my heart to see my only son give such repeated proofs of a mean spirit and sordid disposition!'

"Here the old gentleman shed a flood of tears, and not without some shadow of reason. By this time Launcelot was grown so reserved to his father, that he seldom saw him or any of his relations, except when he was in a manner forced to appear at table, and there his bashfulness seemed every day to increase. On the other hand, he had formed some very strange connexions. Every morning he visited the stable, where he not only conversed with the grooms and helpers, but scraped acquaintance with the horses; he fed his favourites with his own hand, stroked, caressed, and rode them by turns; till at last they grew so familiar, that, even when they were a-field at grass, and saw him at a distance, they would toss their manes, whinny like so many colts at sight of the dam, and, galloping up to the place where he stood, smell him all over.

"You must know that I myself, though a child, was his companion in all these excursions. He took a liking to me on account of my being his godson, and gave me more money than I knew what to do

with. He had always plenty of cash for the asking, as my father was ordered to supply him liberally, the knight thinking that a command of money might help to raise his thoughts to a proper consideration of his own importance. He never could endure a common beggar, that was not either in a state of infancy or of old age; but, in other respects, he made the guineas fly in such a manner, as looked more like madness than generosity. He had no communication with your rich yeomen, but rather treated them and their families with studied contempt, because forsooth they pretended to assume the dress and manners of the gentry.

"They kept their footmen, their saddle horses, and chaises; their wives and daughters appeared in their jewels, their silks, and their satins, their negligees and trollopees; their clumsy shanks, like so many shins of beef, were cased in silk hose and embroidered slippers; their raw red fingers, gross as the pipes of a chamber organ, which had been employed in milking the cows, in twirling the mop or churn-staff, being adorned with diamonds, were taught to thrum the pandola, and even to touch the keys of the harpsichord! Nay, in every village they kept a rout, and set up an assembly; and in one place a hog-butcher was master of the ceremonies.

"I have heard Mr. Greaves ridicule them for their vanity and awkward imitation; and therefore, I believe, he avoided all concerns with them, even when they endeavoured to engage his attention. It was the lower sort of people with whom he chiefly conversed, such as ploughmen, ditchers, and other day-

labourers. To every cottager in the parish he was a bounteous benefactor. He was, in the literal sense of the word, a careful overseer of the poor; for he went from house to house, industriously inqtiiring into the distresses of the people. He repaired their huts, clothed their backs, filled their bellies, and supplied them with necessaries for exercising their industry and different occupations.

"I 'll give you one instance now, as a specimen of his character: — He and I, strolling one day on the side of a common, saw two boys picking hips and haws from the hedges; one seemed to be about five, and the other a year older; they were both barefoot and ragged, but at the same time fat, fair, and in good condition. 'Who do you belong to?' said Mr. Greaves. 'To Mary Stile,' replied the oldest, 'the widow that rents one of them housen.' 'And how dost live, my boy? Thou lookest fresh and jolly,' resumed the squire. 'Lived well enough till yesterday,' answered the child. 'And pray what happened yesterday, my boy?' continued Mr. Greaves. 'Happened!' said he, 'why, mammy had a coople of little Welsh keawes, that gi'en milk enough to fill all our bellies; mammy's, and mine, and Dick's here, and my two little sisters' at hoam: — Yesterday the squire seized the keawes for rent, God rot' un! Mammy's gone to bed sick and sulky; my two sisters be crying at hoam vor vood; and Dick and I be come hither to pick haws and bullies.'

"My godfather's face grew red as scarlet; he took one of the children in either hand, and leading them towards the house, found Sir Everhard talking with

my father before the gate. Instead of avoiding the old gentleman, as usual, he brushed up to him with a spirit he had never shown before, and presenting the two ragged boys, 'Surely, sir,' said he, 'you will not countenance that there ruffian, your steward, in oppressing the widow and fatherless? On pretence of distraining for the rent of a cottage, he has robbed the mother of these and other poor infant-orphans of two cows, which afforded them their whole sustenance. Shall you be concerned in tearing the hard-earned morsel from the mouth of indigence? Shall your name, which has been so long mentioned as a blessing, be now detested as a curse by the poor, the helpless, and forlorn? The father of these babes was once your gamekeeper, who died of a consumption caught in your service. — You see they are almost naked — I found them plucking haws and sloes, in order to appease their hunger. The wretched mother is starving in a cold cottage, distracted with the cries of other two infants, clamorous for food; and while her heart is bursting with anguish and despair, she invokes Heaven to avenge the widow's cause upon the head of her unrelenting landlord!'

"This unexpected address brought tears into the eyes of the good old gentleman. 'Will Clarke,' said he to my father, 'how durst you abuse my authority at this rate? You who know I have always been a protector, not an oppressor of the needy and unfortunate. I charge you, go immediately and comfort this poor woman with immediate relief; instead of her own cows, let her have two of the best milch

cows of my dairy; they shall graze in my parks in summer, and be foddered with my hay in winter. — She shall sit rent-free for life; and I will take care of these her poor orphans.'

"This was a very affecting scene. Mr. Launcelot took his father's hand and kissed it, while the tears ran down his cheeks; and Sir Everhard embraced his son with great tenderness, crying, 'My dear boy! God be praised for having given you such a feeling heart.' My father himself was moved, thof a practitioner of the law, and consequently used to distresses. — He declared, that he had given no directions to distrain; and that the bailiff must have done it by his own authority. — 'If that be the case,' said the young squire, 'let the inhuman rascal be turned out of our service.'

"Well, gemmen, all the children were immediately clothed and fed, and the poor widow had well-nigh run distracted with joy. The old knight, being of a humane temper himself, was pleased to see such proofs of his son's generosity. He was not angry at his spending his money, but at squandering away his time among the dregs of the people. For you must know, he not only made matches, portioned poor maidens, and set up young couples that came together without money; but he mingled in every rustic diversion, and bore away the prize in every contest. He excelled every swain of that district in feats of strength and activity; in leaping, running, wrestling, cricket, cudgel-playing, and pitching the bar; and was confessed to be, out of sight, the best dancer at all wakes and holidays. Happy was the

country-girl who could engage the young squire as her partner! To be sure, it was a comely sight for to see as how the buxom country-lasses, fresh and fragrant and blushing like the rose, in their best apparel dight, their white hose, and clean short dimity petticoats, their gaudy gowns of printed cotton; their top-knots and stomachers, bedizened with bunches of ribbons of various colours, green, pink, and yellow; to see them crowned with garlands, and assembled on May-day, to dance before Squire Launcelot, as he made his morning's progress through the village. Then all the young peasants made their appearance with cockades, suited to the fancies of their several sweet-hearts, and boughs of flowering hawthorn. The children sported about like flocks of frisking lambs, or the young fry swarming under the sunny bank of some meandering river. The old men and women, in their holiday garments, stood at their doors to receive their benefactor, and poured forth blessings on him as he passed. The children welcomed him with their shrill shouts, the damsels with songs of praise, and the young men, with the pipe and tabor, marched before him to the May-pole, which was bedecked with flowers and bloom. There the rural dance began. A plentiful dinner, with oceans of good liquor, was bespoke at the White Hart. The whole village was regaled at the squire's expense; and both the day and the night was spent in mirth and pleasure.

"Lord help you! he could not rest if he thought there was an aching heart in the whole parish. Every paltry cottage was in a little time converted into a

pretty, snug, comfortable habitation, with a wooden porch at the door, glass casements in the windows, and a little garden behind, well stored with greens, roots, and salads. In a word, the poor's rate was reduced to a mere trifle; and one would have thought the golden age was revived in Yorkshire. But, as I told you before, the old knight could not bear to see his only son so wholly attached to these lowly pleasures, while he industriously shunned all opportunities of appearing in that superior sphere to which he was designed by nature and by fortune. He imputed his conduct to meanness of spirit, and advised with my father touching the properest expedient to wean his affections from such low-born pursuits. My father counselled him to send the young gentleman up to London, to be entered as a student in the Temple, and recommended him to the superintendence of some person who knew the town, and might engage him insensibly in such amusements and connexions, as would soon lift his ideas above the humble objects on which they had been hitherto employed.

"This advice appeared so salutary, that it was followed without the least hesitation. The young squire himself was perfectly well satisfied with the proposal; and in a few days he set out for the great city. But there was not a dry eye in the parish at his departure, although he prevailed upon his father to pay in his absence all the pensions he had granted to those who could not live on the fruit of their own industry. In what manner he spent his time in London, it is none of my business to inquire; thof I

know pretty well what kind of lives are led by gemmen of your Inns of Court. — I myself once belonged to Serjeants' Inn, and was perhaps as good a wit and a critic as any Templar of them all. Nay, as for that matter, thof I despise vanity, I can aver with a safe conscience, that I had once the honour to belong to the society called *the Town*. We were all of us attorney's clerks, gemmen, and had our meetings at an ale-house in Butcher Row, where we regulated the diversions of the theatre.

"But to return from this digression. Sir Everhard Greaves did not seem to be very well pleased with the conduct of his son at London. He got notice of some irregularities and scrapes into which he had fallen; and the squire seldom wrote to his father, except to draw upon him for money; which he did so fast, that in eighteen months the old gentleman lost all patience.

"At this period Squire Darnel chanced to die, leaving an only daughter, a minor, heiress of three thousand a year under the guardianship of her uncle Anthony, whose brutal character all the world knows. The breath was no sooner out of his brother's body, than he resolved, if possible, to succeed him in parliament as representative for the borough of Ashenton. Now you must know, that this borough had been for many years a bone of contention between the families of Greaves and Darnel; and at length the difference was compromised by the interposition of friends, on condition that Sir Everhard and Squire Darnel should alternately represent the place in parliament. They agreed to this compromise for their mutual conven-

ience; but they were never heartily reconciled. Their political principles did not tally; and their wives looked upon each other as rivals in fortune and magnificence. So that there was no intercourse between them, thof they lived in the same neighbourhood. On the contrary, in all disputes, they constantly headed the opposite parties. Sir Everhard understanding that Anthony Darnel had begun to canvass, and was putting every iron in the fire, in violation and contempt of the *pactum familiæ* before mentioned, fell into a violent passion, that brought on a severe fit of the gout; by which he was disabled from giving personal attention to his own interest. My father, indeed, employed all his diligence and address, and spared neither money, time, nor constitution, till at length he drank himself into a consumption, which was the death of him. But, after all, there is a great difference between a steward and a principal. Mr. Darnel attended in *propria persona*, flattered and caressed the women, feasted the electors, hired mobs, made processions, and scattered about his money in such a manner, that our friends durst hardly show their heads in public.

"At this very crisis, our young squire, to whom his father had written an account of the transaction, arrived unexpectedly at Greavesbury Hall, and had a long private conference with Sir Everhard. The news of his return spread like wildfire through all that part of the country. Bonfires were made, and the bells set a-ringing in several towns and steeples; and next morning above seven hundred people were assembled at the gate, with music, flags, and streamers, to wel-

come their young squire, and accompany him to the borough of Ashenton. He set out on foot with his retinue, and entered one end of the town just as Mr. Darnel's mob had come in at the other. Both arrived about the same time at the market-place; but Mr. Darnel, mounting first into the balcony of the town-house, made a long speech to the people in favour of his own pretensions, not without some invidious reflections glanced at Sir Everhard, his competitor.

"We did not much mind the acclamations of his party, which we knew had been hired for the purpose; but we were in some pain for Mr. Greaves, who had not been used to speak in public. He took his turn, however, in the balcony, and, uncovering his head, bowed all round with the most engaging courtesy. He was dressed in a green frock, trimmed with gold, and his own dark hair flowed about his ears in natural curls, while his face was overspread with a blush, that improved the glow of youth to a deeper crimson; and I daresay set many a female heart a palpitating. When he made his first appearance, there was just such a humming and clapping of hands as you may have heard when the celebrated Garrick comes upon the stage in King Lear, or King Richard, or any other top character. But how agreeably were we disappointed, when our young gentleman made such an oration as would not have disgraced a Pitt, an Egmont, or a Murray! while he spoke, all was hushed in admiration and attention; you could have almost heard a feather drop to the ground. It would have charmed you to hear with what modesty he recounted the services which his father and grandfather had done to

the corporation; with what eloquence he expatiated upon the shameful infraction of the treaty subsisting between the two families; and with what keen and spirited strokes of satire he retorted the sarcasms of Darnel.

"He no sooner concluded his harangue, than there was such a burst of applause, as seemed to rend the very sky. Our music immediately struck up; our people advanced with their ensigns, and, as every man had a good cudgel, broken heads would have ensued, had not Mr. Darnel and his party thought proper to retreat with uncommon despatch. He never offered to make another public entrance, as he saw the torrent ran so violently against him; but sat down with his loss, and withdrew his opposition, though at bottom extremely mortified and incensed. Sir Everhard was unanimously elected, and appeared to be the happiest man upon earth; for, besides the pleasure arising from his victory over this competitor, he was now fully satisfied that his son, instead of disgracing, would do honour to his family. It would have moved a heart of stone, to see with what a tender transport of paternal joy he received his dear Launcelot, after having heard of his deportment and success at Ashenton; where, by the bye, he gave a ball to the ladies, and displayed as much elegance and politeness, as if he had been bred at the court of Versailles.

"This joyous season was of short duration. In a little time all the happiness of the family was overcast by a sad incident, which hath left such an unfortunate impression upon the mind of the young

gentleman, as, I am afraid, will never be effaced. Mr. Darnel's niece and ward, the great heiress, whose name is Aurelia, was the most celebrated beauty of the whole country; if I said the whole kingdom, or indeed all Europe, perhaps I should barely do her justice. I don't pretend to be a limner, gemmen; nor does it become me to delineate such excellence; but surely I may presume to repeat from the play —

> Oh! she is all that painting can express,
> Or youthful poets fancy when they love?

"At that time she might be about seventeen, tall and fair, and so exquisitely shaped — you may talk of your Venus de Medicis, your Dianas, your Nymphs, and Galateas; but if Praxiteles, and Roubilliac, and Wilton, were to lay their heads together, in order to make a complete pattern of beauty, they would hardly reach her model of perfection. — As for complexion, poets will talk of blending the lily with the rose, and bring in a parcel of similes of cowslips, carnations, pinks, and daisies. — There's Dolly, now, has got a very good complexion. — Indeed, she's the very picture of health and innocence — you are, indeed, my pretty lass; — but *parva componere magnis*. — Miss Darnel is all amazing beauty, delicacy, and dignity! Then the softness and expression of her fine blue eyes; her pouting lips of coral hue; her neck, that rises like a tower of polished alabaster between two mounts of snow. I tell you what, gemmen, it don't signify talking; if e'er a one of you was to meet this young lady alone, in the midst of a heath or common, or any unfrequented place, he would down on his knees, and

think he kneeled before some supernatural being. I'll tell you more: she not only resembles an angel in beauty, but a saint in goodness, and an hermit in humility; — so void of all pride and affectation; so soft, and sweet, and affable, and humane! Lord! I could tell such instances of her charity!

"Sure enough, she and Sir Launcelot were formed by nature for each other. Howsoever, the cruel hand of fortune hath intervened, and severed them for ever. Every soul that knew them both, said it was a thousand pities but they should come together, and extinguish, in their happy union, the mutual animosity of the two families, which had so often embroiled the whole neighbourhood. Nothing was heard but the praises of Miss Aurelia Darnel and Mr. Launcelot Greaves; and no doubt the parties were prepossessed, by this applause, in favour of each other. At length, Mr. Greaves went one Sunday to her parish church; but, though the greater part of the congregation watched their looks, they could not perceive that she took the least notice of him; or that he seemed to be struck with her appearance. He afterwards had an opportunity of seeing her, more at leisure, at the York assembly, during the races; but this opportunity was productive of no good effect, because he had that same day quarrelled with her uncle on the turf.

"An old grudge, you know, gemmen, is soon inflamed to a fresh rupture. It was thought Mr. Darnel came on purpose to show his resentment. They differed about a bet upon Miss Cleverlegs, and, in the course of the dispute, Mr. Darnel called him

a petulant boy. The young squire, who was as hasty as gunpowder, told him he was man enough to chastise him for his insolence; and would do it on the spot, if he thought it would not interrupt the diversion. In all probability they would have come to points immediately, had not the gentlemen interposed; so that nothing further passed, but abundance of foul language on the part of Mr. Anthony, and a repeated defiance to single combat.

"Mr. Greaves, making a low bow, retired from the field; and in the evening danced at the assembly with a young lady from the bishoprick, seemingly in good temper and spirits, without having any words with Mr. Darnel, who was also present. But in the morning he visited that proud neighbour betimes; and they had almost reached a grove of trees on the north side of the town, when they were suddenly overtaken by half a dozen gentlemen, who had watched their motions. It was in vain for them to dissemble their design, which could not now take effect. They gave up their pistols, and a reconciliation was patched up by the pressing remonstrances of their common friends; but Mr. Darnel's hatred still rankled at bottom, and soon broke out in the sequel. About three months after this transaction, his niece Aurelia, with her mother, having been to visit a lady in the chariot, the horses being young, and not used to the traces, were startled at the braying of a jackass on the common, and, taking fright, ran away with the carriage, like lightning. The coachman was thrown from the box, and the ladies screamed piteously for help. Mr. Greaves chanced

to be a-horseback on the other side of an enclosure, when he heard their shrieks; and riding up the hedge, knew the chariot, and saw their disaster. The horses were then running full speed in such a direction, as to drive headlong over a precipice into a stone quarry, where they and the chariot, and the ladies, must be dashed to pieces.

"You may conceive, gemmen, what his thoughts were when he saw such a fine young lady, in the flower of her age, just plunging into eternity; when he saw the lovely Aurelia on the brink of being precipitated among rocks, where her delicate limbs must be mangled and tore asunder; when he perceived, that, before he could ride round by the gate, the tragedy would be finished. The fence was so thick and high, flanked with a broad ditch on the outside, that he could not hope to clear it, although he was mounted on Scipio, bred out of Miss Cowslip, the sire Muley, and his grandsire the famous Arabian Mustapha. — Scipio was bred by my father, who would not have taken a hundred guineas for him, from any other person but the young squire — indeed, I have heard my poor father say" —

By this time Ferret's impatience was become so outrageous, that he exclaimed in a furious tone, "D—n your father, and his horse, and his colt into the bargain!"

Tom made no reply; but began to strip with great expedition. Captain Crowe was so choked with passion that he could utter nothing but disjointed sentences. He rose from his seat, brandished his horsewhip, and, seizing his nephew by the collar,

cried, "Odd's heartlikins! sirrah, I have a good mind — Devil fire your running tackle, you landlubber! — can't you steer without all this tacking hither and thither, and the Lord knows whither? — 'Noint my block! I'd give thee a rope's end for thy supper if it wan't" —

Dolly had conceived a sneaking kindness for the young lawyer, and thinking him in danger of being roughly handled, flew to his relief. She twisted her hand in Crowe's neckcloth without ceremony, crying, "Sha't then, I tell thee, old codger — who kears a vig vor thy voolish tantrums?"

While Crowe looked black in the face, and ran the risk of strangulation under the gripe of this Amazon, Mr. Clarke having disengaged himself of his hat, wig, coat, and waistcoat, advanced in an elegant attitude of manual offence towards the misanthrope, who snatched up a gridiron from the chimney corner, and Discord seemed to clap her sooty wings in expectation of battle. But as the reader may have more than once already cursed the unconscionable length of this chapter, we must postpone to the next opportunity the incidents that succeeded this denunciation of war.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT THE KNIGHT, WHEN HEARTILY SET IN FOR SLEEPING, WAS NOT EASILY DISTURBED.

IN all probability the kitchen of the Black Lion, from a domestic temple of society and good fellowship, would have been converted into a scene or stage of sanguinary dispute, had not Pallas, or Discretion, interposed in the person of Mr. Fillet, and, with the assistance of the ostler, disarmed the combatants, not only of their arms, but also of their resentment.

The impetuosity of Mr. Clarke was a little checked at sight of the gridiron, which Ferret brandished with uncommon dexterity; a circumstance from whence the company were, upon reflection, induced to believe, that before he plunged into the sea of politics, he had occasionally figured in the character of that facetious droll, who accompanies your itinerant physicians, under the familiar appellation of Merry-Andrew, or Jack-Pudding, and on a wooden stage entertains the populace with a solo on the salt-box, or a sonata on the tongs and gridiron. Be that as it may, the young lawyer seemed to be a little discomposed at the glancing of this extraordinary weapon of offence, which the fair hands of Dolly

had scoured, until it had shone as bright as the shield of Achilles; or as the emblem of good old English fare, which hangs by a red ribbon round the neck of that thrice-honoured sage's head, in velvet bonnet cased, who presides by rotation at the genial board, distinguished by the title of the *Beef-steak Club*: where the delicate rumps irresistibly attract the stranger's eye, and, while they seem to cry, "Come cut me — come cut me," constrain, by wondrous sympathy, each mouth to overflow. Where the obliging and humorous Jemmy B—t, the gentle Billy H—d, replete with human kindness, and the generous Johnny B—d, respected and beloved by all the world, attend as the priests and ministers of mirth, good cheer, and jollity, and assist with culinary art the raw, unpractised, awkward guest.

But to return from this digressive simile. The ostler no sooner stept between those menacing antagonists, than Tom Clarke very quietly resumed his clothes, and Mr. Ferret resigned the gridiron without further question. The doctor did not find it quite so easy to release the throat of Captain Crowe from the masculine grasp of the virago Dolly, whose fingers could not be disengaged until the honest seaman was almost at the last gasp. After some pause, during which he panted for breath, and untied his neck-cloth, "D—n thee, for a brimstone galley," cried he; "I was never so grappled withal since I knew a card from a compass. — Adzooks! the jade has so tautened my rigging, d'ye see, that I — Snatch my bowlines, if I come athwart thy hawser, I'll turn thy keel upwards — or mayhap set thee a-driving under

thy bare poles — I will — I will, you hell-fire, saucy — I will."

Dolly made no reply; but seeing Mr. Clarke sit down again with great composure, took her station likewise at the opposite side of the apartment. Then Mr. Fillet requested the lawyer to proceed with his story, which, after three hems, he accordingly prosecuted in these words:

"I told you, gemmen, that Mr. Greaves was mounted on Scipio, when he saw Miss Darnel and her mother in danger of being hurried over a precipice. Without reflecting a moment, he gave Scipio the spur, and at one spring he cleared five-and-twenty feet, over hedge and ditch and every obstruction. Then he rode full speed, in order to turn the coach-horses; and, finding them quite wild and furious, endeavoured to drive against the counter of the hither horse, which he missed, and staked poor Scipio on the pole of the coach. The shock was so great, that the coach-horses made a full stop within ten yards of the quarry, and Mr. Greaves was thrown forwards towards the coach-box, which mounting with admirable dexterity, he seized the reins before the horses could recover of their fright. At that instant the coachman came running up, and loosed them from the traces with the utmost despatch. Mr. Greaves had now time to give his attention to the ladies, who were well-nigh distracted with fear. He no sooner opened the chariot door than Aurelia, with a wildness of look, sprung into his arms, and, clasping him round the neck, fainted away. I leave you to guess, gemmen, what were his feelings at this

instant. The mother was not so discomposed, but that she could contribute to the recovery of her daughter, whom the young squire still supported in his embrace. At length she retrieved the use of her senses, and, perceiving the situation in which she was, the blood revisited her face with a redoubled glow, while she desired him to set her down upon the turf.

"Mrs. Darnel, far from being shy or reserved in her compliments of acknowledgments, kissed Mr. Launcelot without ceremony, the tears of gratitude running down her cheeks; she called him her dear son, her generous deliverer, who, at the hazard of his own life, had saved her and her child from the most dismal fate that could be imagined.

"Mr. Greaves was so much transported on this occasion, that he could not help disclosing a passion, which he had hitherto industriously concealed. 'What I have done,' said he, 'was but a common office of humanity, which I would have performed for any of my fellow-creatures; but for the preservation of Miss Aurelia Darnel, I would at any time sacrifice my life with pleasure.' The young lady did not hear this declaration unmoved. Her face was again flushed, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure. Nor was the youth's confession disagreeable to the good lady, her mother, who, at one glance, perceived all the advantages of such an union between the two families.

"Mr. Greaves proposed to send the coachman to his father's stable for a pair of sober horses, that could be depended upon, to draw the ladies home to their

own habitation; but they declined the offer, and chose to walk, as the distance was not great. He then insisted upon his being their conductor; and, each taking him under the arm, supported them to their own gate, where such an apparition filled all the domestics with astonishment. Mrs. Darnel taking him by the hand, led him into the house, where she welcomed him with another affectionate embrace, and indulged him with an ambrosial kiss of Aurelia, saying, 'But for you, we had both been by this time in eternity. Sure it was Heaven that sent you as an angel to our assistance!' She kindly inquired if he had himself sustained any damage in administering that desperate remedy to which they owed their lives. She entertained him with a small collation; and, in the course of the conversation, lamented the animosity which had so long divided two neighbouring families of such influence and character. He was not slow in signifying his approbation of her remarks, and expressing the most eager desire of seeing all those unhappy differences removed. In a word, they parted with mutual satisfaction.

"Just as he advanced from the outward gate, on his return to Greavesbury Hall, he was met by Anthony Darnel on horseback, who, riding up to him with marks of surprise and resentment, saluted him with, 'Your servant, sir. — Have you any commands for me?' The other replying with an air of indifference, 'None at all,' — Mr. Darnel asked, what had procured him the honour of a visit. The young gentleman, perceiving by the manner in which he spoke, that the old quarrel was not yet extinguished, an-

swered with equal disdain, that the visit was not intended for him; and that, if he wanted to know the cause of it, he might inform himself by his own servants. 'So I shall,' cried the uncle of Aurelia; 'and perhaps let you know my sentiments of the matter.' — 'Hereafter as it may be,' said the youth; who, turning out of the avenue, walked home, and made his father acquainted with the particulars of this adventure.

"The old gentleman chid him for his rashness; but seemed pleased with the success of his attempt; and still more so, when he understood his sentiments of Aurelia, and the deportment of the ladies.

"Next day the son sent over a servant with a compliment to inquire about their health; and the messenger, being seen by Mr. Darnel, was told that the ladies were indisposed, and did not choose to be troubled with messages. The mother was really seized with a fever, produced by the agitation of her spirits, which every day became more and more violent, until the physicians despaired of her life. Believing that her end approached, she sent a trusty servant to Mr. Greaves, desiring that she might see him without delay; and he immediately set out with the messenger, who introduced him in the dark.

"He found the old lady in bed almost exhausted, and the fair Aurelia sitting by her overwhelmed with grief, her lovely hair in the utmost disorder, and her charming eyes inflamed with weeping. The good lady beckoning Mr. Launcelot to approach, and

directing all the attendants to quit the room, except a favourite maid, from whom I learned the story, she took him by the hand, and fixing her eyes upon him with all the fondness of a mother, shed some tears in silence, while the same marks of sorrow trickled down his cheeks. After this affecting pause, 'My dear son,' said she, 'Oh! that I could have lived to see you so indeed! you find me hastening to the goal of life.' Here the tender-hearted Aurelia, being unable to contain herself longer, broke out into a violent passion of grief, and wept aloud. The mother, waiting patiently till she had thus given vent to her anguish, calmly entreated her to resign herself submissively to the will of Heaven; then turning to Mr. Launcelot, 'I had indulged,' said she, 'a fond hope of seeing you allied to my family. This is no time for me to insist upon the ceremonies and forms of a vain world. Aurelia looks upon you with the eyes of tender prepossession.' No sooner had she pronounced these words than he threw himself on his knees before the young lady, and pressing her hand to his lips, breathed the softest expressions which the most delicate love could suggest. 'I know,' resumed the mother, 'that your passion is mutually sincere, and I should die satisfied if I thought your union would not be opposed; but that violent man, my brother-in-law, who is Aurelia's sole guardian, will thwart her wishes with every obstacle that brutal resentment and implacable malice can contrive. Mr. Greaves, I have long admired your virtues, and am confident that I can depend upon your honour. You shall give me your word, that when I am gone you will take

no steps in this affair without the concurrence of your father, and endeavour, by all fair and honourable means, to vanquish the prejudices, and obtain the consent of her uncle; the rest we must leave to the dispensation of Providence.'

"The squire promised, in the most solemn and fervent manner, to obey all her injunctions, as the last dictates of a parent whom he should never cease to honour. Then she favoured them both with a great deal of salutary advice touching their conduct before and after marriage, and presented him with a ring as a memorial of her affection, at the same time he pulled another off his finger, and made a tender of it as a pledge of his love to Aurelia, whom her mother permitted to receive this token. Finally, he took a last farewell of the good matron, and returned to his father with the particulars of this interview.

"In two days Mrs. Darnel departed this life, and Aurelia was removed to the house of a relation, where her grief had like to have proved fatal to her constitution.

"In the meantime, the mother was no sooner committed to the earth, than Mr. Greaves, mindful of her exhortations, began to take measures for a reconciliation with the guardian. He engaged several gentlemen to interpose their good offices, but they always met with the most mortifying repulse, and at last Anthony Darnel declared that his hatred to the house of Greaves was hereditary, habitual, and unconquerable. He swore he would spend his heart's blood to perpetuate the quarrel, and that, sooner than his

niece should match with young Launcelot, he would sacrifice her with his own hand.

"The young gentleman, finding his prejudice so rancorous and invincible, left off making any further advances, and, since he found it impossible to obtain his consent, resolved to cultivate the good graces of Aurelia, and wed her in despite of her implacable guardian. He found means to establish a literary correspondence with her as soon as her grief was a little abated, and even to effect an interview, after her return to her own house; but he soon had reason to repent of his indulgence. The uncle entertained spies upon the young lady, who gave him an account of this meeting, in consequence of which she was suddenly hurried to some distant part of the country, which we never could discover.

"It was then we thought Mr. Launcelot a little disordered in his brain, his grief was so wild, and his passion so impetuous. He refused all sustenance, neglected his person, renounced his amusements, rode out in the rain, sometimes bareheaded; strolled about the fields all night, and became so peevish, that none of the domestics durst speak to him without the hazard of broken bones. Having played these pranks for about three weeks, to the unspeakable chagrin of his father, and the astonishment of all that knew him, he suddenly grew calm, and his good-humour returned. But this, as your seafaring people say, was a deceitful calm, that soon ushered in a dreadful storm.

"He had long sought an opportunity to tamper with some of Mr. Darnel's servants, who could inform him of the place where Aurelia was confined; but there

was not one about the family who could give him that satisfaction, for the persons who accompanied her remained as a watch upon her motions, and none of the other domestics were privy to the transaction. All attempts proving fruitless, he could no longer restrain his impatience, but throwing himself in the way of the uncle, upbraided him in such harsh terms, that a formal challenge ensued. They agreed to decide their difference without witnesses, and one morning, before sunrise, met on that very common where Mr. Greaves had saved the life of Aurelia. The first pistol was fired on each side without any effect, but Mr. Darnel's second wounded the young squire in the flank; nevertheless, having a pistol in reserve, he desired his antagonist to ask his life. The other, instead of submitting, drew his sword, and Mr. Greaves, firing his piece into the air, followed his example. The contest then became very hot, though of short continuance. Darnel being disarmed at the first onset, our young squire gave him back the sword, which he was base enough to use a second time against his conqueror. Such an instance of repeated ingratitude and brutal ferocity divested Mr. Greaves of his temper and forbearance. He attacked Mr. Anthony with great fury, and at the first longe ran him up to the hilt, at the same time seized with his left hand the shell of his enemy's sword, which he broke in disdain. Mr. Darnel having fallen, the other immediately mounted his horse, which he had tied to a tree before the engagement, and, riding full speed to Ashenton, sent a surgeon to Anthony's assistance. He afterwards ingenuously confessed all

these particulars to his father, who was overwhelmed with consternation, for the wounds of Darnel were judged mortal; and, as no person had seen the particulars of the duel, Mr. Launcelot might have been convicted of murder.

"On these considerations, before a warrant could be served upon him, the old knight, by dint of the most eager entreaties, accompanied with marks of horror and despair, prevailed upon his son to withdraw himself from the kingdom until such time as the storm should be overblown. Had his heart been unengaged, he would have chose to travel, but at this period, when his whole soul was engrossed, and so violently agitated by his passion for Aurelia, nothing but the fear of seeing the old gentleman run distracted would have induced him to desist from the pursuit of that young lady, far less quit the kingdom where she resided.

"Well then, gemmen, he repaired to Harwich, where he embarked for Holland, from whence he proceeded to Brussels, where he procured a passport from the French king, by virtue of which he travelled to Marseilles, and there took a tartan for Genoa. The first letter Sir Everhard received from him was dated at Florence. Meanwhile the surgeon's prognostic was not altogether verified. Mr. Darnel did not die immediately of his wounds, but he lingered a long time, as it were in the arms of death, and even partly recovered, yet, in all probability, he will never be wholly restored to the enjoyment of his health, and is obliged every summer to attend the hot-well at Bristol. As his wounds began to heal,

his hatred to Mr. Greaves seemed to revive with augmented violence, and he is now, if possible, more than ever determined against all reconciliation.

"Mr. Launcelot, after having endeavoured to amuse his imagination with a succession of curious objects, in a tour of Italy, took up his residence at a town called Pisa, and there fell into a deep melancholy, from which nothing could rouse him but the news of his father's death.

"The old gentleman, God rest his soul, never held up his head after the departure of his darling Launcelot, and the dangerous condition of Darnel kept up his apprehension. This was reinforced by the obstinate silence of the youth, and certain accounts of his disordered mind, which he had received from some of those persons who take pleasure in communicating disagreeable tidings. A complication of all these grievances, co-operating with a severe fit of the gout and gravel, produced a fever, which, in a few days, brought Sir Everhard to his long home, after he had settled his affairs with heaven and earth, and made his peace with God and man. I'll assure you, gemmen, he made a most edifying and Christian end; he died regretted by all his neighbours except Anthony, and might be said to be embalmed by the tears of the poor, to whom he was always a bounteous benefactor.

"When the son, now Sir Launcelot, came home, he appeared so meagre, wan, and hollow-eyed, that the servants hardly knew their young master. His first care was to take possession of his fortune, and settle accounts with the steward who had succeeded

my father. These affairs being discussed, he spared no pains to get intelligence concerning Miss Darnel; and soon learned more of that young lady than he desired to know; for it was become the common talk of the country, that a match was agreed upon between her and young Squire Sycamore, a gentleman of a very great fortune. These tidings were probably confirmed under her own hand, in a letter which she wrote to Sir Launcelot. The contents were never exactly known but to the parties themselves; nevertheless, the effects were too visible, for, from that blessed moment, he spoke not one word to any living creature for the space of three days; but was seen sometimes to shed a flood of tears, and sometimes to burst out into a fit of laughing. At last he broke silence, and seemed to wake from his disorder. He became more fond than ever of the exercise of riding, and began to amuse himself again with acts of benevolence.

"One instance of his generosity and justice deserves to be recorded in brass or marble. You must know, gemmen, the rector of the parish was lately dead, and Sir Everhard had promised the presentation to another clergyman. In the meantime, Sir Launcelot chancing one Sunday to ride through a lane, perceived a horse saddled and bridled, feeding on the side of a fence; and, casting his eyes around, beheld on the other side of the hedge an object lying extended on the ground, which he took to be the body of a murdered traveller. He forthwith alighted, and, leaping into the field, descried a man at full length, wrapped in a greatcoat and

writhing in agony. Approaching nearer, he found it was a clergyman, in his gown and cassock. When he inquired into the case, and offered his assistance, the stranger rose up, thanked him for his courtesy, and declared that he was now very well. The knight who thought there was something mysterious in this incident, expressed a desire to know the cause of his rolling in the grass in that manner, and the clergyman, who knew his person, made no scruple in gratifying his curiosity. 'You must know, sir,' said he, 'I serve the curacy of your own parish, for which the late incumbent paid me twenty pounds a year; but this sum being scarce sufficient to maintain my wife and children, who are five in number, I agreed to read prayers in the afternoon at another church, about four miles from hence; and for this additional duty I receive ten pounds more. As I keep a horse, it was formerly an agreeable exercise rather than a toil; but of late years I have been afflicted with a rupture, for which I consulted the most eminent operators in the kingdom; but I have no cause to rejoice in the effects of their advice, though one of them assured me I was completely cured. The malady is now more troublesome than ever, and often comes upon me so violently while I am on horseback, that I am forced to alight, and lie down upon the ground, until the cause of the disorder can for the time be reduced.'

"Sir Launcelot not only condoled with him upon his misfortune, but desired him to throw up the second cure, and he would pay him ten pounds a year out of his own pocket. 'Your generosity confounds

me, good sir,' replied the clergyman; 'and yet I ought not to be surprised at any instance of benevolence in Sir Launcelot Greaves; but I will check the fulness of my heart. I shall only observe, that your good intention towards me can hardly take effect. The gentleman, who is to succeed the late incumbent, has given me notice to quit the premises, as he hath provided a friend of his own for the curacy.' 'What!' cried the knight, 'does he mean to take your bread from you, without assigning any other reason?' 'Surely, sir,' replied the ecclesiastic, 'I know of no other reason. I hope my morals are irreproachable, and that I have done my duty with a conscientious regard; I may venture an appeal to the parishioners among whom I have lived these seventeen years. After all, it is natural for every man to favour his own friends in preference to strangers. As for me, I propose to try my fortune in the great city, and I doubt not but Providence will provide for me and my little ones.'

"To this declaration Sir Launcelot made no reply; but, riding home, set on foot a strict inquiry into the character of this man, whose name was Jenkins. He found that he was a reputed scholar, equally remarkable for his modesty and good life; that he visited the sick, assisted the needy, compromised disputes among his neighbours, and spent his time in such a manner as would have done honour to any Christian divine. Thus informed, the knight sent for the gentleman to whom the living had been promised, and accosted him to this effect: 'Mr. Tootle, I have a favour to ask of you. The person who serves the

cure of this parish is a man of good character, beloved by the people, and has a large family. I shall be obliged to you if you will continue him in the curacy.' The other told him he was sorry he could not comply with his request, being that he had already promised the curacy to a friend of his own. 'No matter,' replied Sir Launcelot, 'since I have not interest with you, I will endeavour to provide for Mr. Jenkins in some other way.'

"That same afternoon he walked over to the curate's house, and told him that he had spoken in his behalf to Dr. Tootle, but the curacy was pre-engaged. The good man having made a thousand acknowledgments for the trouble his honour had taken; 'I have not interest sufficient to make you curate,' said the knight, 'but I can give you the living itself, and that you shall have.' So saying, he retired, leaving Mr. Jenkins incapable of uttering one syllable, so powerfully was he struck with this unexpected turn of good fortune. The presentation was immediately made out, and in a few days Mr. Jenkins was put in possession of his benefice, to the inexpressible joy of the congregation.

"Hitherto everything went right, and every unprejudiced person commended the knight's conduct; but in a little time his generosity seemed to overleap the bounds of discretion, and even in some cases might be thought tending to a breach of the king's peace. For example, he compelled, *vi et armis*, a rich farmer's son to marry the daughter of a cottager, whom the young fellow had debauched. Indeed, it seems there was a promise of marriage in the case, though it could

not be legally ascertained. The wench took on dismally, and her parents had recourse to Sir Launcelot, who, sending for the delinquent, expostulated with him severely on the injury he had done the young woman, and exhorted him to save her life and reputation by performing his promise, in which case he, Sir Launcelot, would give her three hundred pounds to her portion. Whether the farmer thought there was something interested in this uncommon offer, or was a little elevated by the consciousness of his father's wealth, he rejected the proposal with rustic disdain, and said, if so be as how the wench would swear the child to him, he would settle it with the parish; but declared, that no squire in the land should oblige him to buckle with such a cracked pitcher. This resolution, however, he could not maintain; for, in less than two hours the rector of the parish had direction to publish the banns, and the ceremony was performed in due course.

"Now, though we know not precisely the nature of the arguments that were used with the farmer, we may conclude they were of the minatory species, for the young fellow could not, for some time, look any person in the face.

"The knight acted as the general redresser of grievances. If a woman complained to him of being ill-treated by her husband, he first inquired into the foundation of the complaint, and, if he found it just, catechised the defendant. If the warning had no effect, and the man proceeded to fresh acts of violence, then his judge took the execution of the law in his own hand, and horsewhipped the party. Thus he

involved himself in several law-suits, that drained him of pretty large sums of money. He seemed particularly incensed at the least appearance of oppression; and supported divers poor tenants against the extortion of their landlords. Nay, he has been known to travel two hundred miles as a volunteer, to offer his assistance in the cause of a person, who he heard was by chicanery and oppression wronged of a considerable estate. He accordingly took her under his protection, relieved her distresses, and was at a vast expense in bringing the suit to a determination; which being unfavourable to his client, he resolved to bring an appeal into the House of Lords, and certainly would have executed his purpose, if the gentlewoman had not died in the interim."

At this period Ferret interrupted the narrator, by observing that the said Greaves was a common nuisance, and ought to be prosecuted on the statute of barratry.

"No, sir," resumed Mr. Clarke, "he cannot be convicted of barratry, unless he is always at variance with some person or other, a mover of suits and quarrels, who disturbs the peace under colour of law. Therefore he is in the indictment styled, *Communis malefactor, calumniator, et seminator litium.*"

"Pr'ythee, truce with thy definitions," cried Ferret, "and make an end to thy long-winded story. Thou hast no title to be so tedious, until thou comest to have a coif in the Court of Common Pleas."

Tom smiled contemptuous, and had just opened his mouth to proceed, when the company were disturbed by a hideous repetition of groans, that seemed

to issue from the chamber in which the body of the squire was deposited. The landlady snatched the candle, and ran into the room, followed by the doctor and the rest; and this accident naturally suspended the narration. In like manner we shall conclude the chapter, that the reader may have time to breathe and digest what he has already heard.

CHAPTER FIVE

IN WHICH THIS RECAPITULATION DRAWS TO A CLOSE.

WHEN the landlady entered the room from whence the groaning proceeded, she found the squire lying on his back, under the dominion of the nightmare, which rode him so hard that he not only groaned and snorted, but the sweat ran down his face in streams. The perturbation of his brain, occasioned by this pressure, and the fright he had lately undergone, gave rise to a very terrible dream, in which he fancied himself apprehended for a robbery. The horror of the gallows was strong upon him, when he was suddenly awaked by a violent shock from the doctor; and the company broke in upon his view, still perverted by fear, and bedimmed by slumber. His dream was now realised by a full persuasion that he was surrounded by the constable and his gang. The first object that presented itself to his disordered view was the figure of Ferret, who might very well have passed for the finisher of the law; against him, therefore, the first effort of his despair was directed. He started upon the floor, and seizing a certain utensil, that shall be nameless, launched it at the misanthrope with such violence, that had he not cautiously slipt his head aside, it is supposed that actual fire would have

been produced from the collision of two such hard and solid substances. All future mischief was prevented by the strength and agility of Captain Crowe, who, springing upon the assailant, pinioned his arms to his sides, crying, "O, d—n ye, if you are for running a-head, I'll soon bring you to your bearings."

The squire, thus restrained, soon recollected himself, and gazing upon every individual in the apartment, "Wounds!" said he, "I've had an ugly dream. I thought, for all the world, they were carrying me to Newgate, and that there was Jack Ketch coom to vetch me before my taim."

Ferret, who was the person he had thus distinguished, eyeing him with a look of the most emphatic malevolence, told him it was very natural for a knave to dream of Newgate; and that he hoped to see the day when his dream would be found a true prophecy, and the commonwealth purged of all such rogues and vagabonds. But it could not be expected that the vulgar would be honest and conscientious, while the great were distinguished by profligacy and corruption. The squire was disposed to make a practical reply to this insinuation, when Mr. Ferret prudently withdrew himself from the scene of altercation. The good woman of the house persuaded his antagonist to take out his nap, assuring him that the eggs and bacon, with a mug of excellent ale, should be forthcoming in due season. The affair being thus fortunately adjusted, the guests returned to the kitchen, and Mr. Clarke resumed his story to this effect: —

"You 'll please to take notice, gemmen, that,

besides the instances I have alleged of Sir Launcelot's extravagant benevolence, I could recount a great many others of the same nature, and particularly the laudable vengeance he took of a country lawyer. I'm sorry that any such miscreant should belong to the profession. He was clerk of the assize, gemmen, in a certain town, not a great way distant; and having a blank pardon left by the judges for some criminals whose cases were attended with favourable circumstances, he would not insert the name of one who could not procure a guinea for the fee; and the poor fellow, who had only stole an hour-glass out of a shoemaker's window, was actually executed, after a long respite, during which he had been permitted to go abroad, and earn his subsistence by his daily labour.

"Sir Launcelot being informed of this barbarous act of avarice, and having some ground that bordered on the lawyer's estate, not only rendered him contemptible and infamous, by exposing him as often as they met on the grand jury, but also, being vested with the property of the great tithe, proved such a troublesome neighbour, sometimes by making waste among his hay and corn, sometimes by instituting suits against him for petty trespasses, that he was fairly obliged to quit his habitation, and remove into another part of the kingdom.

"All these avocations could not divert Sir Launcelot from the execution of a wild scheme, which has carried his extravagance to such a pitch that I am afraid, if a statute — you understand me, gemmen — were sued, the jury would — I don't choose to ex-

plain myself further on this circumstance. Be that as it may, the servants at Greavesbury Hall were not a little confounded, when their master took down from the family armoury a complete suit of armour, which belonged to his great-grandfather, Sir Marmaduke Greaves, a great warrior, who lost his life in the service of his king. This armour being scoured, repaired, and altered, so as to fit Sir Launcelot, a certain knight, whom I don't choose to name, because I believe he cannot be proved *compos mentis*, came down, seemingly on a visit, with two attendants; and, on the evening of the festival of St. George, the armour being carried into the chapel, Sir Launcelot (Lord have mercy upon us!) remained all night in that dismal place alone, and without light, though it was confidently reported all over the country, that the place was haunted by the spirit of his great-great-uncle, who, being lunatic, had cut his throat from ear to ear, and was found dead on the communion table."

It was observed, that while Mr. Clarke rehearsed this circumstance his eyes began to stare and his teeth to chatter; while Dolly, whose looks were fixed invariably on this narrator, growing pale, and hitching her joint-stool nearer the chimney, exclaimed, in a frightened tone, "Moother, moother, in the neame of God, look to 'un! how a quakes! as I 'm a precious saoul, a looks as if a saw something." Tom forced a smile, and thus proceeded:—

"While Sir Launcelot tarried within the chapel, with the doors all locked, the other knight stalked round and round it on the outside, with his sword

drawn, to the terror of divers persons who were present at the ceremony. As soon as day broke he opened one of the doors, and going in to Sir Launcelot, read a book for some time, which we did suppose to be the constitutions of knight-errantry. Then we heard a loud slap, which echoed through the whole chapel, and the stranger pronounce, with an audible and solemn voice, 'In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I dub thee knight — be faithful, bold, and fortunate.' You cannot imagine, gemmen, what an effect this strange ceremony had upon the people who were assembled. They gazed at one another in silent horror, and when Sir Launcelot came forth completely armed, took to their heels in a body, and fled with the utmost precipitation. I myself was overturned in the crowd; and this was the case with that very individual person who now serves him as squire. He was so frightened that he could not rise, but lay roaring in such a manner that the knight came up and gave him a thwack with his lance across the shoulders, which roused him with a vengeance. For my own part I freely own I was not unmoved at seeing such a figure come stalking out of a church in the grey of the morning; for it recalled to my remembrance the idea of the ghost in Hamlet, which I had seen acted in Drury Lane, when I made my first trip to London, and I had not yet got rid of the impression.

"Sir Launcelot, attended by the other knight, proceeded to the stable, from whence, with his own hands, he drew forth one of his best horses, a fine mettlesome sorrel, who had got blood in him, orna-

mented with rich trappings. In a trice, the two knights, and the other two strangers, who now appeared to be trumpeters, were mounted. Sir Launcelot's armour was lacquered black ; and on his shield was represented the moon in her first quarter, with the motto, *Impleat orbem.* The trumpets having sounded a charge, the stranger pronounced with a loud voice, 'God preserve this gallant knight in all his honourable achievements ; and may he long continue to press the sides of his now adopted steed, which I denominate Bronzomarte, hoping that he will rival in swiftness and spirit, Bayardo, Brigliadoro, or any other steed of past or present chivalry !' After another flourish of the trumpets, all four clapped spurs to their horses, Sir Launcelot couching his lance, and galloped to and fro, as if they had been mad, to the terror and astonishment of all the spectators.

"What should have induced our knight to choose this here man for his squire, is not easy to determine ; for, of all the servants about the house, he was the least likely either to please his master, or engage in such an undertaking. His name is Timothy Crabshaw, and he acted in the capacity of whipper-in to Sir Everhard. He afterwards married the daughter of a poor cottager, by whom he has several children, and was employed about the house as a ploughman and carter. To be sure, the fellow has a dry sort of humour about him ; but he was universally hated among the servants, for his abusive tongue and perverse disposition, which often brought him into trouble ; for, though the fellow is as strong

as an elephant, he has no more courage naturally than a chicken; I say naturally, because, since his being a member of knight-errantry, he has done some things that appear altogether incredible and preternatural.

"Timothy kept such a bawling, after he had received the blow from Sir Launcelot, that everybody on the field thought that some of his bones were broken; and his wife, with five bantlings, came snivelling to the knight, who ordered her to send the husband directly to his house. Tim accordingly went thither, groaning piteously all the way, creeping along, with his body bent like a Greenland canoe. As soon as he entered the court, the outward door was shut; and Sir Launcelot coming downstairs with a horsewhip in his hand, asked what was the matter with him that he complained so dismally? To this question he replied, that it was as common as duck-weed in his country for a man to complain when his bones were broke. 'What should have broke your bones?' said the knight. 'I cannot guess,' answered the other, 'unless it was that delicate switch that your honour in your mad pranks handled so dexterously upon my carcass.' Sir Launcelot then told him, there was nothing so good for a bruise, as a sweat; and he had the remedy in his hand. Timothy, eyeing the horsewhip askance, observed that there was another still more speedy, to wit, a moderate pill of lead, with a sufficient dose of gunpowder. 'No, rascal,' cried the knight; 'that must be reserved for your betters.' So saying, he employed the instrument so effectually, that Crab-

shaw soon forgot his fractured ribs, and capered about with great agility.

"When he had been disciplined in this manner to some purpose, the knight told him he might retire, but ordered him to return next morning, when he should have a repetition of the medicine, provided he did not find himself capable of walking in an erect posture.

"The gate was no sooner thrown open, than Timothy ran home with all the speed of a greyhound, and corrected his wife, by whose advice he had pretended to be so grievously damaged in his person.

"Nobody dreamed that he would next day present himself at Greavesbury Hall; nevertheless, he was there very early in the morning, and even closeted a whole hour altogether with Sir Launcelot. He came out, making wry faces, and several times slapped himself on the forehead, crying, 'Bodikins! thof he be crazy, I an't, that I an't?' When he was asked what was the matter, he said, he believed the devil had got in him, and he should never be his own man again.

"That same day the knight carried him to Ashenton, where he bespoke those accoutrements which he now wears; and while these were making, it was thought the poor fellow would have run distracted. He did nothing but growl, and curse and swear to himself, run backwards and forwards between his own hut and Greavesbury Hall, and quarrel with the horses in the stable. At length, his wife and family were removed into a snug farmhouse, that

happened to be empty, and care taken that they should be comfortably maintained.

"These precautions being taken, the knight, one morning, at daybreak, mounted Bronzomarte, and Crabshaw, as his squire, ascended the back of a clumsy cart-horse, called Gilbert. This, again, was looked upon as an instance of insanity in the said Crabshaw; for, of all the horses in the stable, Gilbert was the most stubborn and vicious, and had often like to have done mischief to Timothy while he drove the cart and plough. When he was out of humour, he would kick and plunge as if the devil was in him. He once thrust Crabshaw into the middle of a quick-set hedge, where he was terribly torn; another time he canted him over his head into a quagmire, where he stuck with his heels up, and must have perished, if people had not been passing that way; a third time he seized him in the stable with his teeth by the rim of the belly, and swung him off the ground, to the great danger of his life; and I'll be hanged, if it was not owing to Gilbert, that Crabshaw was now thrown into the river.

"Thus mounted and accoutred, the knight and his squire set out on their first excursion. They turned off from the common highway, and travelled all that day without meeting anything worthy recounting; but, in the morning of the second day, they were favoured with an adventure. The hunt was upon a common through which they travelled, and the hounds were in full cry after a fox, when Crabshaw, prompted by his own mischievous dis-

position, and neglecting the order of his master, who called aloud to him to desist, rode up to the hounds, and crossed them at full gallop. The huntsman, who was not far off, running towards the squire, bestowed upon his head such a memento with his pole, as made the landscape dance before his eyes; and, in a twinkling he was surrounded by all the fox-hunters, who plied their whips about his ears with infinite agility. Sir Launcelot, advancing at an easy pace, instead of assisting the disastrous squire, exhorted his adversaries to punish him severely for his insolence, and they were not slow in obeying this injunction. Crabshaw, finding himself in this disagreeable situation, and that there was no succour to be expected from his master, on whose prowess he had depended, grew desperate, and, clubbing his whip, laid about him with great fury, wheeling about Gilbert, who was not idle; for he, having received some of the favours intended for his rider, both bit with his teeth and kicked with his heels; and, at last, made his way through the ring that encircled him, though not before he had broke the huntsman's leg, lamed one of the best horses on the field, and killed half a score of the hounds.

"Crabshaw, seeing himself clear of the fray, did not tarry to take leave of his master, but made the most of his way to Greavesbury Hall, where he appeared hardly with any vestige of the human countenance, so much had he been defaced in this adventure. He did not fail to raise a great clamour against Sir Launcelot, whom he cursed as a coward in plain terms, swearing he would never serve him

another day. But whether he altered his mind on cooler reflection, or was lectured by his wife, who well understood her own interest, he rose with the cock, and went again in quest of Sir Launcelot, whom he found on the eve of a very hazardous enterprise.

"In the midst of a lane, the knight happened to meet with a party of about forty recruits, commanded by a serjeant, a corporal, and a drummer, which last had his drum slung at his back; but seeing such a strange figure mounted on a high-spirited horse, he was seized with an inclination to divert his company. With this view, he braced his drum, and, hanging it in its proper position, began to beat a point of war, advancing under the very nose of Bronzomarte; while the corporal exclaimed, 'D—n my eyes, who have we got here?—old King Stephen, from the horse armoury in the Tower, or the fellow that rides armed at my Lord Mayor's show?' The knight's steed seemed, at least, as well pleased with the sound of the drum, as were the recruits that followed it; and signified his satisfaction in some curvetings and caprioles, which did not at all discompose the rider, who, addressing himself to the serjeant, 'Friend,' said he, 'you ought to teach your drummer better manners. I would chastise the fellow on the spot for his insolence, were it not out of the respect I bear to his majesty's service.' 'Respect mine a—!' cried this ferocious commander; 'what, d'ye think to frighten us with your pewter piss-pot on your skull, and your lacquered pot-lid on your arm? Get out of the way, and be d—ned, or I'll raise with my halbert such a clatter upon your

target, that you 'll remember it the longest day you have to live.' At that instant, Crabshaw arriving upon Gilbert, 'So, rascal,' said Sir Launcelot, 'you are returned. Go and beat in that scoundrel's drum-head.'

"The squire, who saw no weapons of offence about the drummer but a sword, which he hoped the owner durst not draw, and being resolved to exert himself in making atonement for his desertion, advanced to execute his master's orders; but Gilbert, who liked not the noise, refused to proceed in the ordinary way. Then the squire, turning his tail to the drummer, he advanced in a retrograde motion, and with one kick of his heels, not only broke the drum into a thousand pieces, but laid the drummer in the mire, with such a blow upon his hip-bone, that he halted all the days of his life. The recruits, perceiving the discomfiture of their leader, armed themselves with stones; the serjeant raised his halbert in a posture of defence, and immediately a severe action ensued. By this time, Crabshaw had drawn his sword, and begun to lay about him like a devil incarnate; but, in a little time, he was saluted by a volley of stones, one of which knocked out two of his grinders, and brought him to the earth, where he had like to have found no quarter; for the whole company crowded about him, with their cudgels brandished; and perhaps he owed his preservation to their pressing so hard that they hindered one another from using their weapons.

"Sir Launcelot, seeing with indignation the unworthy treatment his squire had received, and scorning to stain his lance with the blood of plebeians, instead

of couching it at the rest, seized it by the middle, and fetching one blow at the serjeant, broke in twain the halbert which he had raised as a quarter-staff for his defence. The second stroke encountered his pate, which being the hardest part about him, sustained the shock without damage; but the third, lighting on his ribs, he honoured the giver with immediate prostration. The general being thus overthrown, Sir Launcelot advanced to the relief of Crabshaw, and handled his weapon so effectually, that the whole body of the enemy were disabled or routed, before one cudgel had touched the carcass of the fallen squire. As for the corporal, instead of standing by his commanding officer, he had overleaped the hedge, and run to the constable of an adjoining village for assistance. Accordingly, before Crabshaw could be properly remounted, the peace officer arrived with his posse; and by the corporal was charged with Sir Launcelot and his squire, as two highwaymen. The constable, astonished at the martial figure of the knight, and intimidated at sight of the havoc he had made, contented himself with standing at a distance, displaying the badge of his office, and reminding the knight that he represented his majesty's person.

"Sir Launcelot, seeing the poor man in great agitation, assured him that his design was to enforce, not violate the laws of his country; and that he and his squire would attend him to the next justice of peace; but, in the meantime, he, in his turn, charged the peace officer with the serjeant and drummer, who had begun the fray.

A BOORISH JUSTICE

"The justice had been a pettifogger, and was a sycophant to a nobleman in the neighbourhood, who had a post at court. He therefore thought he should oblige his patron, by showing his respect for *the military*; but treated our knight with the most boorish insolence; and refused to admit him into his house, until he had surrendered all his weapons of offence to the constable. Sir Launcelot and his squire being found the aggressors, the justice insisted upon making out their mittimus, if they did not find bail immediately; and could hardly be prevailed upon to agree that they should remain at the house of the constable, who, being a publican, undertook to keep them in safe custody, until the knight could write to his steward. Meanwhile he was bound over to the peace; and the serjeant with his drummer were told they had a good action against him for assault and battery, either by information or indictment.

"They were not, however, so fond of the law as the justice seemed to be. Their sentiments had taken a turn in favour of Sir Launcelot, during the course of his examination, by which it appeared that he was really a gentleman of fashion and fortune; and they resolved to compromise the affair without the intervention of his worship. Accordingly, the serjeant repaired to the constable's house, where the knight was lodged; and humbled himself before his honour, protesting with many oaths, that, if he had known his quality, he would have beaten the drummer's brains about his ears, for presuming to give his honour or his horse the least disturbance; thof the

fellow, he believed, was sufficiently punished in being a cripple for life.

"Sir Launcelot admitted of his apologies; and taking compassion on the fellow who had suffered so severely for his folly, resolved to provide for his maintenance. Upon the representation of the parties to the justice, the warrant was next day discharged; and the knight returned to his own house, attended by the serjeant and the drummer mounted on horseback, the recruits being left to the corporal's charge.

"The halberdier found the good effects of Sir Launcelot's liberality; and his companion being rendered unfit for his majesty's service, by the heels of Gilbert, is now entertained at Greavesbury Hall, where he will probably remain for life.

"As for Crabshaw, his master gave him to understand, that if he did not think him pretty well chastised for his presumption and flight, by the discipline he had undergone in the last two adventures, he would turn him out of his service with disgrace. Timothy said he believed it would be the greatest favour he could do him to turn him out of a service in which he knew he should be rib-roasted every day, and murdered at last.

"In this situation were things at Greavesbury Hall about a month ago, when I crossed the country to Ferrybridge, where I met my uncle. Probably, this is the first incident of their second excursion; for the distance between this here house and Sir Launcelot's estate does not exceed fourscore or ninety miles."

CHAPTER SIX

IN WHICH THE READER WILL PERCEIVE THAT IN SOME CASES MADNESS IS CATCHING.

MR. CLARKE having made an end of his narrative, the surgeon thanked him for the entertainment he had received; and Mr. Ferret shrugged up his shoulders in silent disapprobation. As for Captain Crowe, who used at such pauses to pour in a broadside of dismembered remarks, linked together like chain-shot, he spoke not a syllable for some time; but, lighting a fresh pipe at the candle, began to roll such voluminous clouds of smoke as in an instant filled the whole apartment, and rendered himself invisible to the whole company. Though he thus shrouded himself from their view, he did not long remain concealed from their hearing. They first heard a strange dissonant cackle, which the doctor knew to be a sea-laugh, and this was followed by an eager exclamation of "Rare pastime, strike my yards and topmasts!—I 've a good mind—why should n't—many a losing voyage I 've — smite my taffrel but I wool"—

By this time he had relaxed so much in his fumigation, that the tip of his nose and one eye reappeared; and as he had drawn his wig forwards, so as to cover his whole forehead, the figure that now

saluted their eyes was much more ferocious and terrible than the fire-breathing chimera of the ancients. Notwithstanding this dreadful appearance, there was no indignation in his heart, but, on the contrary, an agreeable curiosity, which he was determined to gratify.

Addressing himself to Mr. Fillet, "Pr'ythee, doctor," said he, "canst tell, whether a man, without being rated a lord or a baron, or what d'ye call um, d'ye see, may n't take to the highway in the way of a frolic, d'ye see? — Adad! for my own part, brother, I 'm resolved as how to cruise a bit in the way of an arrant — if so be as I can't at once be commander, mayhap I may be bore upon the books as a petty officer or the like, d'ye see."

"Now, the Lord forbid!" cried Clarke, with tears in his eyes, "I 'd rather see you dead than brought to such a dilemma." "Mayhap thou wouldst," answered the uncle; "for then, my lad, there would be some picking — aha! dost thou tip me the traveller, my boy?" Tom assured him he scorned any such mercenary views. "I am only concerned," said he, "that you should take any step that might tend to the disgrace of yourself or your family; and I say again I had rather die than live to see you reckoned any otherwise than compos." — "Die and be d—ned! you shambling half-timber'd son of a —," cried the choleric Crowe; "dost talk to me of keeping a reckoning and compass? — I could keep a reckoning, and box my compass long enough before thy keelstone was laid — Sam Crowe is not come here to ask thy counsel how to steer his course." "Lord! sir,"

resumed the nephew, "consider what people will say — all the world will think you mad." "Set thy heart at ease, Tom," cried the seaman, "I'll have a trip to and again in this here channel. Mad! what then? I think for my part one half of the nation is mad — and the other not very sound — I don't see why I han't as good a right to be mad as another man — but, doctor, as I was saying, I 'd be bound to you, if you would direct me where I can buy that same tackle that an arrant must wear; as for the matter of the long pole, headed with iron, I 'd never desire better than a good boat-hook, and could make a special good target of that there tin sconce that holds the candle — mayhap any blacksmith will hammer me a skull-cap, d' ye see, out of an old brass kettle; and I can call my horse by the name of my ship, which was *Mufti*."

The surgeon was one of those wags who can laugh inwardly, without exhibiting the least outward mark of mirth or satisfaction. He at once perceived the amusement which might be drawn from this strange disposition of the sailor, together with the most likely means which could be used to divert him from such an extravagant pursuit. He therefore tipped Clarke the wink with one side of his face, while the other was very gravely turned to the captain, whom he addressed to this effect. "It is not far from hence to Sheffield, where you might be fitted completely in half a day — then you must wake your armour in church or chapel, and be dubbed. As for this last ceremony, it may be performed by any person whatsoever. Don Quixote was dubbed by his

landlord; and there are many instances on record, of errants obliging and compelling the next person they met to cross their shoulders, and dub them knights. I myself would undertake to be your godfather; and I have interest enough to procure the keys of the parish church that stands hard by; besides, this is the eve of St. Martin, who was himself a knight-errant, and therefore a proper patron to a novitiate. I wish we could borrow Sir Launcelot's armour for the occasion."

Crowe, being struck with this hint, started up, and laying his fingers on his lips to enjoin silence, walked off softly on his tiptoes, to listen at the door of our knight's apartment, and judge whether or not he was asleep. Mr. Fillet took this opportunity to tell his nephew that it would be in vain for him to combat this humour with reason and argument; but the most effectual way of diverting him from the plan of knight-errantry would be, to frighten him heartily while he should keep his vigil in the church; towards the accomplishment of which purpose he craved the assistance of the misanthrope as well as the nephew. Clarke seemed to relish the scheme; and observed, that his uncle, though endued with courage enough to face any human danger, had at bottom a strong fund of superstition, which he had acquired, or at least improved, in the course of a sea-life. Ferret, who perhaps would not have gone ten paces out of his road to save Crowe from the gallows, nevertheless engaged as an auxiliary, merely in hope of seeing a fellow-creature miserable; and even undertook to be the principal agent in this adventure. For this office

indeed he was better qualified than they could have imagined. In the bundle which he kept under his greatcoat, there was, together with divers nostrums, a small vial of liquid phosphorus, sufficient, as he had already observed, to frighten a whole neighbourhood out of their senses.

In order to concert the previous measures without being overheard, these confederates retired with a candle and lantern into the stable; and their backs were scarce turned, when Captain Crowe came in loaded with pieces of the knight's armour, which he had conveyed from the apartment of Sir Launcelot, whom he had left fast asleep.

Understanding that the rest of the company were gone out for a moment, he could not resist the inclination he felt of communicating his intention to the landlady, who, with her daughter, had been too much engaged in preparing Crabshaw's supper, to know the purport of their conversation. The good woman, being informed of the captain's design to remain alone all night in the church, began to oppose it with all her rhetoric. She said it was setting his Maker at defiance, and a wilful running into temptation. She assured him that all the country knew that the church was haunted by spirits and hobgoblins; that lights had been seen in every corner of it, and a tall woman in white had one night appeared upon the top of the tower; that dreadful shrieks were often heard to come from the south aisle, where a murdered man had been buried; that she herself had seen the cross on the steeple all a-fire; and one evening as she passed a-horseback close by the stile

at the entrance into the churchyard, the horse stood still, sweating and trembling, and had no power to proceed, until she had repeated the Lord's Prayer.

These remarks made a strong impression on the imagination of Crowe, who asked in some confusion, if she had got that same prayer in print? She made no answer, but reaching the Prayer-Book from a shelf, and turning up the leaf, put it into his hand; then the captain having adjusted his spectacles, began to read, or rather spell aloud, with equal eagerness and solemnity. He had refreshed his memory so well as to remember the whole, when the doctor, returning with his companions, gave him to understand that he had procured the key of the chancel, where he might watch his armour as well as in the body of the church; and that he was ready to conduct him to the spot. Crowe was not now quite so forward as he had appeared before, to achieve this adventure. He began to start objections with respect to the borrowed armour; he wanted to stipulate the comforts of a can of flip, and a candle's end, during his vigil; and hinted something of the damage he might sustain from your malicious imps of darkness.

The doctor told him, the constitutions of chivalry absolutely required that he should be left in the dark alone, and fasting, to spend the night in pious meditations; but if he had any fears which disturbed his conscience, he had much better desist, and give up all thoughts of knight-errantry, which could not consist with the least shadow of apprehension. The captain, stung by this remark, replied not a word,

but gathering up the armour into a bundle, threw it on his back, and set out for the place of probation, preceded by Clarke with the lantern. When they arrived at the church, Fillet, who had procured the key from the sexton, who was his patient, opened the door, and conducted our novice into the middle of the chancel, where the armour was deposited. Then bidding Crowe draw his hanger, committed him to the protection of Heaven, assuring him he would come back, and find him either dead or alive by daybreak, and perform the remaining part of the ceremony. So saying, he and the other associates shook him by the hand and took their leave, after the surgeon had tilted up the lantern to take a view of his visage, which was pale and haggard.

Before the door was locked upon him, he called aloud, "Hilloa! doctor, hip — another word, d'ye see." They forthwith returned to know what he wanted, and found him already in a sweat. "Hark ye, brother," said he, wiping his face, "I do suppose as how one may pass away the time in whistling the Black Joke, or singing Black-eyed Susan, or some such sorrowful ditty." — "By no means," cried the doctor; "such pastimes are neither suitable to the place, nor the occasion, which is altogether a religious exercise. If you have got any psalms by heart, you may sing a stave or two, or repeat the Doxology." — "Would I had Tom Laverick here," replied our novitiate; "he would sing your anthems like a sea-mew — a had been a clerk a-shore — many's the time and often I've given him a rope's end for singing psalms in the larboard watch. Would I had

hired the son of a b—h to have taught me a cast of his office — but it cannot be holp, brother — if we can't go large, we must haul up a wind, as the saying is; if we can't sing, we must pray." The company again left him to his devotion, and returned to the public-house, in order to execute the essential part of their project.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN WHICH THE KNIGHT RESUMES HIS IMPORTANCE.

DOCTOR FILLET having borrowed a couple of sheets from the landlady, dressed the misanthrope and Tom Clarke in ghostly apparel, which was reinforced by a few drops of liquid phosphorus, from Ferret's vial, rubbed on the foreheads of the two adventurers. Thus equipped, they returned to the church with their conductor, who entered with them softly at an aisle which was opposite to a place where the novice kept watch. They stole unperceived through the body of the church; and though it was so dark that they could not distinguish the captain with the eye, they heard the sound of his steps, as he walked backwards and forwards on the pavement with uncommon expedition, and an ejaculation now and then escaped in a murmur from his lips.

The triumvirate having taken their station with a large pew in their front, the two ghosts uncovered their heads, which by the help of the phosphorus exhibited a pale and lambent flame, extremely dismal and ghastly to the view; then Ferret in a squeaking tone, exclaimed, "Samuel Crowe! Samuel Crowe!" The captain hearing himself accosted in this manner, at such a time, and in such a place, replied, "Hil-

loah"; and turning his eyes towards the quarter whence the voice seemed to proceed, beheld the terrible apparition. This no sooner saluted his view than his hair bristled up, his knees began to knock, and his teeth to chatter, while he cried aloud, "In the name of God, where are you bound, ho?" To this hail the misanthrope answered, "We are the spirits of thy grandmother Jane and thy aunt Bridget."

At mention of these names, Crowe's terrors began to give way to his resentment, and he pronounced in a quick tone of surprise, mixed with indignation, "What d'ye want? what d'ye want? what d'ye want, ho?" The spirit replied, "We are sent to warn thee of thy fate." "From whence, ho?" cried the captain, whose choler had by this time well-nigh triumphed over his fear. "From Heaven," said the voice. "Ye lie, ye b—s of hell!" did our novice exclaim; "ye are d—ned for heaving me out of my right, five fathom and a half by the lead, in burning brimstone. Don't I see the blue flames come out of your hawse holes? — mayhap you may be the devil himself, for aught I know — but I trust in the Lord, d'ye see — I never disrated a kinsman, d'ye see, so don't come alongside of me — put about on th' other tack, d'ye see — you need not clap hard a-weather, for you'll soon get to hell again with a flowing sail."

So saying, he had recourse to his Paternoster; but perceiving the apparitions approach, he thundered out, "Avast, — avast — sheer off, ye babes of hell, or I'll be foul of your forelights." He accordingly

sprung forwards with his hanger, and very probably would have set the spirits on their way to the other world, had he not fallen over a pew in the dark, and entangled himself so much among the benches, that he could not immediately recover his footing. The triumvirate took this opportunity to retire; and such was the precipitation of Ferret in his retreat, that he encountered a post by which his right eye sustained considerable damage; a circumstance which induced him to inveigh bitterly against his own folly, as well as the impertinence of his companions, who had inveigled him into such a troublesome adventure. Neither he nor Clarke could be prevailed upon to revisit the novice. The doctor himself thought his disease was desperate; and, mounting his horse, returned to his own habitation.

Ferret, finding all the beds in the public-house were occupied, composed himself to sleep in a Windsor chair at the chimney corner; and Mr. Clarke, whose disposition was extremely amorous, resolved to renew his practices on the heart of Dolly. He had reconnoitred the apartments in which the bodies of the knight and his squire were deposited, and discovered close by the top of the staircase a sort of a closet or hovel, just large enough to contain a truckle bed, which, from some other particulars, he supposed to be the bedchamber of his beloved Dolly, who had by this time retired to her repose. Full of this idea, and instigated by the demon of desire, Mr. Thomas crept softly upstairs, and lifting the latch of the closet door, his heart began to palpitate with joyous expectation; but before he could breathe

the gentle effusions of his love, the supposed damsel started up and seizing him by the collar with a Herculean gripe, uttered, in the voice of Crabshaw, "It wan't for nothing that I dreamed of Newgate, sirrah; but I'd have thee to know, an arrant squire is not to be robbed by such a peddling thief as thee — here I'll howld thee vast, an the devil were in thy doublet — help! murder! vire! help!"

It was impossible for Mr. Clarke to disengage himself, and equally impracticable to speak in his own vindication; so that here he stood trembling and half throttled, until the whole house being alarmed, the landlady and her ostler ran upstairs with a candle. When the light rendered objects visible, an equal astonishment prevailed on all sides; Crabshaw was confounded at sight of Mr. Clarke, whose person he well knew; and releasing him instantly from his grasp, "Bodikins!" cried he, "I believe as how this hause is haunted — who thought to meet with Measter Laawyer Clarke at midnight, and so far from hoam?" The landlady could not comprehend the meaning of this encounter; nor could Tom conceive how Crabshaw had transported himself thither from the room below, in which he saw him quietly reposed. Yet nothing was more easy than to explain this mystery: the apartment below was the chamber which the hostess and her daughter reserved for their own convenience; and this particular having been intimated to the squire while he was at supper, he had resigned his bed quietly, and been conducted hither in the absence of the company. Tom, recollecting himself as well as he could, professed himself of Crab-

shaw's opinion, that the house was haunted, declaring that he could not well account for his being there in the dark; and leaving those that were assembled to discuss this knotty point, retired downstairs in hope of meeting with his charmer, whom accordingly he found in the kitchen just risen, and wrapped in a loose dishabille.

The noise of Crabshaw's cries had awakened and aroused his master, who, rising suddenly in the dark, snatched up his sword that lay by his bedside, and hastened to the scene of tumult, where all their mouths were opened at once, to explain the cause of the disturbance, and make an apology for breaking his honour's rest. He said nothing, but taking the candle in his hand, beckoned his squire to follow him into his apartment, resolving to arm and take horse immediately. Crabshaw understood his meaning; and while he shuffled on his clothes, yawning hideously all the while, wished the lawyer at the devil for having visited him so unseasonably; and even cursed himself for the noise he had made, in consequence of which he foresaw he should now be obliged to forfeit his night's rest, and travel in the dark, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather. "Pox rot thee, Tom Clarke, for a wicked lawyer!" said he to himself; "hadst thou been hanged at Bartlemy-tide, I should this night have slept in peace, that I should — an I would there was a blister on this plaguy tongue of mine for making such a hollo-ballo, that I do — five gallons of cold water has my poor belly been drenched with since night fell, so as my reins and my liver are all one as if they were turned into ice, and my whole

harslet shakes and shivers like a vial of quicksilver. I have been dragged, half-drowned like a rotten ewe, from the bottom of a river; and who knows but I may be next dragged quite dead from the bottom of a coal-pit — if so be as I am, I shall go to hell to be sure, for being consarned like in my own moorder, that I will, so I will; for, a plague on it! I had no business with the vagaries of this crazy-peated measter of mine, a pox on him, say I."

He had just finished this soliloquy as he entered the apartment of his master, who desired to know what was become of his armour. Timothy, understanding that it had been left in the room when the knight undressed, began to scratch his head in great perplexity; and at last declared it as his opinion, that it must have been carried off by witchcraft. Then he related his adventure with Tom Clarke, who he said was conveyed to his bedside he knew not how; and concluded with affirming they were no better than Papishes who did not believe in witchcraft. Sir Launcelot could not help smiling at his simplicity; but assuming a peremptory air, he commanded him to fetch the armour without delay, that he might afterwards saddle the horses, in order to prosecute their journey.

Timothy retired in great tribulation to the kitchen, where, finding the misanthrope, whom the noise had also disturbed, and, still impressed with the notion of his being a conjurer, he offered him a shilling if he would cast a figure, and let him know what was become of his master's armour.

Ferret, in hope of producing more mischief, in-

formed him without hesitation, that one of the company had conveyed it into the chancel of the church, where he would now find it deposited; at the same time presenting him with the key, which Mr. Fillet had left in his custody.

The squire, who was none of those who set hobgoblins at defiance, being afraid to enter the church alone at these hours, bargained with the ostler to accompany and light him with a lantern. Thus attended, he advanced to the place where the armour lay in a heap, and loaded it upon the back of his attendant without molestation, the lance being shouldered over the whole. In this equipage they were just going to retire, when the ostler, hearing a noise at some distance, wheeled about with such velocity, that one end of the spear saluting Crabshaw's pate, the poor squire measured his length on the ground; and, crushing the lantern in his fall, the light was extinguished. The other, terrified at these effects of his own sudden motion, threw down his burden, and would have betaken himself to flight, had not Crabshaw laid fast hold on his leg, that he himself might not be deserted. The sound of the pieces clattering on the pavement roused Captain Crowe from a trance or slumber, in which he had lain since the apparition vanished; and he hallooed, or rather bellowed, with vast vociferation. Timothy and his friend were so intimidated by this terrific strain, that they thought no more of the armour, but ran home arm in arm, and appeared in the kitchen with all the marks of horror and consternation.

When Sir Launcelot came forth wrapped in his

cloak, and demanded his arms, Crabshaw declared that the devil had them in possession; and this assertion was confirmed by the ostler, who pretended to know the devil by his roar. Ferret sat in his corner, maintaining the most mortifying silence, and enjoying the impatience of the knight, who in vain requested an explanation of this mystery. At length his eyes began to lighten, when, seizing Crabshaw in one hand, and the ostler in the other, he swore by Heaven he would dash their souls out, and raze the house to the foundation, if they did not instantly disclose the particulars of this transaction. The good woman fell on her knees, protesting, in the name of the Lord, that she was innocent as the child unborn, thof she had lent the captain a Prayer-Book to learn the Lord's Prayer, a candle and lantern to light him to the church, and a couple of clean sheets, for the use of the other gentlemen. The knight was more and more puzzled by this declaration; when Mr. Clarke, coming into the kitchen, presented himself with a low obeisance to his old patron.

Sir Launcelot's anger was immediately converted into surprise. He set at liberty the squire and the ostler, and stretching out his hand to the lawyer, "My good friend Clarke," said he, "how came you hither? Can you solve this knotty point which has involved us all in such confusion?"

Tom forthwith began a very circumstantial recapitulation of what had happened to his uncle; in what manner he had been disappointed of the estate; how he had accidentally seen his honour, been en-

amoured of his character, and become ambitious of following his example. Then he related the particulars of the plan which had been laid down to divert him from his design, and concluded with assuring the knight, that the captain was a very honest man, though he seemed to be a little disordered in his intellects. "I believe it," replied Sir Launcelot; "madness and honesty are not incompatible — indeed, I feel it by experience."

Tom proceeded to ask pardon, in his uncle's name, for having made so free with the knight's armour; and begged his honour, for the love of God, would use his authority with Crowe, that he might quit all thoughts of knight-errantry, for which he was by no means qualified; for, being totally ignorant of the laws of the land, he would be continually committing trespasses, and bring himself into trouble. He said, in case he should prove refractory, he might be apprehended by virtue of a friendly warrant, for having feloniously carried off the knight's accoutrements. "Taking away another man's moveables," said he, "and personal goods against the will of the owner, is *furtum* and felony according to the statute. Different indeed from robbery, which implies putting in fear in the king's highway, *in alta via regia violenter et felonice captum et asportatum, in magnum terrorem*, etc.; for if the robbery be laid in the indictment, as done *in quadam via pedestri*, in a footpath, the offender will not be ousted of his clergy. It must be *in alta via regia;* and your honour will please to take notice, that robberies committed on the river Thames are adjudged as done *in alta via regia;* for

the king's highstream is all the same as the king's highway."

Sir Launcelot could not help smiling at Tom's learned investigation. He congratulated him on the progress he had made in the study of the law. He expressed his concern at the strange turn the captain had taken, and promised to use his influence in persuading him to desist from the preposterous design he had formed.

The lawyer, thus assured, repaired immediately to the church, accompanied by the squire, and held a parley with his uncle, who, when he understood that the knight in person desired a conference, surrendered up the arms quietly, and returned to the public-house.

Sir Launcelot received the honest seaman with his usual complacency; and perceiving great discomposure in his looks, said, he was sorry to hear he had passed such a disagreeable night to so little purpose. Crowe, having recruited his spirits with a bumper of brandy, thanked him for his concern, and observed, that he had passed many a hard night in his time; but such another as this, he would not be bound to weather for the command of the whole British navy. "I have seen Davy Jones in the shape of a blue flame, d' ye see, hopping to and fro on the sprit-sail yardarm; and I 've seen your Jacks o' the Lanthorn, and Wills o' the Wisp, and many such spirits, both by sea and land. But to-night I 've been boarded by all the devils and d—ned souls in hell, squeaking and squalling, and glimmering and glaring. Bounce went the door — crack went the pew — crash came the tackle

— white-sheeted ghosts dancing in one corner by the glow-worm's light — black devils hobbling in another — Lord have mercy upon us! and I was hailed, Tom, I was, by my grandmother Jane, and my aunt Bridget, d' ye see — a couple of d—n'd — but they 're roasting; that 's one comfort, my lad."

When he had thus disburdened his conscience, Sir Launcelot introduced the subject of the new occupation at which he aspired. "I understand," said he, "that you are desirous of treading the paths of errantry, which, I assure you, are thorny and troublesome. Nevertheless, as your purpose is to exercise your humanity and benevolence, so your ambition is commendable. But towards the practice of chivalry, there is something more required than the virtues of courage and generosity. A knight-errant ought to understand the sciences, to be master of ethics or morality, to be well versed in theology, a complete casuist, and minutely acquainted with the laws of his country. He should not only be patient of cold, hunger, and fatigue, righteous, just, and valiant, but also chaste, religious, temperate, polite, and conversable; and have all his passions under the rein, except love, whose empire he should submissively acknowledge." He said, this was the very essence of chivalry; and no man had ever made such a profession of arms, without first having placed his affection upon some beauteous object, for whose honour, and at whose command, he would cheerfully encounter the most dreadful perils.

He took notice, that nothing could be more irregular than the manner in which Crowe had attempted to keep his vigil. For he had never served his novi-

tiate — he had not prepared himself with abstinence and prayer — he had not provided a qualified godfather for the ceremony of dubbing — he had no armour of his own to wake; but, on the very threshold of chivalry, which is the perfection of justice, had unjustly purloined the arms of another knight. That this was a mere mockery of a religious institution, and therefore unpleasing in the sight of Heaven; witness the demons and hobgoblins that were permitted to disturb and torment him in his trial.

Crowe having listened to these remarks with earnest attention, replied, after some hesitation, "I am bound to you, brother, for your kind and Christian counsel — I doubt as how I've steered by a wrong chart, d' ye see — as for the matter of the sciences, to be sure, I know Plain Sailing and Mercator; and am an indifferent good seaman, thof I say it that should not say it. But as to all the rest, no better than the viol-block or the geer-capstan. Religion I han't much overhauled; and we tars laugh at your polite conversation, thof, mayhap, we can chaunt a few ballads to keep the hands awake in the night watch; then for chastity, brother, I doubt that 's not expected in a sailor just come ashore, after a long voyage — sure all those poor hearts won't be d—ned for steering in the wake of nature. As for a sweetheart, Bet Mizen of St. Catherine's would fit me to a hair — she and I are old messmates; and what signifies talking, brother, she knows already the trim of my vessel, d' ye see." He concluded with saying, he thought he wa'n't too old to learn; and if Sir Launcelot would take him in tow as his tender,

he would stand by him all weathers, and it should not cost his consort a farthing's expense.

The knight said, he did not think himself of consequence enough to have such a pupil, but should always be ready to give him his best advice; as a specimen of which, he exhorted him to weigh all the circumstances, and deliberate calmly and leisurely, before he actually engaged in such a boisterous profession; assuring him, that if, at the end of three months, his resolution should continue, he would take upon himself the office of his instructor. In the meantime he gratified the hostess for his lodging, put on his armour, took leave of the company, and, mounting Bronzomarte, proceeded southerly, being attended by his squire Crabshaw, grumbling, on the back of Gilbert.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHICH IS WITHIN A HAIR'S-BREADTH OF PROVING HIGHLY INTERESTING.

LEAVING Captain Crowe and his nephew for the present, though they, and even the misanthrope, will reappear in due season, we are now obliged to attend the progress of the knight, who proceeded in a southerly direction, insensible of the storm that blew, as well as of the darkness, which was horrible. For some time, Crabshaw ejaculated curses in silence; till at length his anger gave way to his fear, which waxed so strong upon him, that he could no longer resist the desire of alleviating it, by entering into a conversation with his master. By way of introduction, he gave Gilbert the spur, directing him towards the flank of Bronzomarte, which he encountered with such a shock, that the knight was almost dismounted.

When Sir Launcelot, with some warmth, asked the reason of this attack, the squire replied in these words: "The devil, God bless us! mun be playing his pranks with Gilbert too, as sure as I 'm a living soul — I'se wager a teaster, the foul fiend has left the seaman, and got into Gilbert, that he has — when a

has passed through an ass and a horse, I'se marvel what beast a will get into next." "Probably into a mule," said the knight; "in that case, you will be in some danger — but I can, at any time, dispossess you with a horse-whip." — "Ay, ay," answered Timothy, "your honour has a mortal good hand at giving a flap with a fox's tail, as the saying is — 't is a wonderment you did not try your hand on that there wiseacre that stole your honour's harness, and wants to be an arrant with a murrain to 'un. Lord help his fool's head, it becomes him as a sow doth a cart saddle." "There is no guilt in infirmity," said the knight; "I punish the vicious only." "I would your honour would punish Gilbert then," cried the squire, "for 't is the most vicious tuoad that ever I laid a leg over — but as to that same seafaring man, what may his distemper be?"

"Madness," answered Sir Launcelot. "Bodikins," exclaimed the squire, "I doubt as how other volks are leame of the same leg — but it an't vor such small gentry as he to be mad; they mun leave that to their betters." "You seem to hint at me, Crabshaw. Do you really think I am mad?" "I may say as how I have looked your honour in the mouth; and a sorry dog should I be, if I did not know your humours as well as I know e'er a beast in the steable at Greavesbury Hall." "Since you are so well acquainted with my madness," said the knight, "what opinion have you of yourself, who serve and follow a lunatic?" "I hope I han't served your honour for nothing, but I shall inherit some of your cast vagaries — when your honour is pleased to be mad,

I should be very sorry to be found right in my senses. Timothy Crabshaw will never eat the bread of unthankfulness — it shall never be said of him, that he was wiser than his measter. As for the matter of following a madman, we may see your honour's face is made of a fiddle; every one that looks on you, loves you." This compliment the knight returned, by saying, "If my face is a fiddle, Crabshaw, your tongue is a fiddlestick that plays upon it — yet your music is very disagreeable — you don't keep time." "Nor you neither, measter," cried Timothy, "or we should n't be here wandering about under a cloud of night, like sheep-stealers, or evil spirits with troubled consciences."

Here the discourse was interrupted by a sudden disaster; in consequence of which, the squire uttered an inarticulate roar, that startled the knight himself, who was very little subject to the sensation of fear. But his surprise was changed into vexation, when he perceived Gilbert without a rider passing by, and kicking his heels with great agility. He forthwith turned his steed, and riding back a few paces, found Crabshaw rising from the ground. When he asked what was become of his horse, he answered in a whimpering tone, "Horse! would I could once see him fairly carrion for the hounds — for my part, I believe as how 't is no horse, but a devil incarnate; and yet I've been worse mounted, that I have — I 'd like to have rid a horse that was foaled of an acorn."

This accident happened in a hollow way, overshadowed with trees, one of which the storm had blown down, so that it lay over the road, and one of

its boughs projecting horizontally, encountered the squire as he trotted along in the dark. Chancing to hitch under his long chin, he could not disengage himself, but hung suspended like a flitch of bacon; while Gilbert, pushing forward, left him dangling, and, by his awkward gambols, seemed to be pleased with the joke. This capricious animal was not retaken, without the personal endeavours of the knight; for Crabshaw absolutely refusing to budge a foot from his honour's side, he was obliged to alight, and fasten Bronzomarte to a tree. Then they set out together, and, with some difficulty, found Gilbert with his neck stretched over a five-barred gate, snuffing up the morning air. The squire, however, was not remounted, without first having undergone a severe reprehension from his master, who upbraided him with his cowardice, threatened to chastise him on the spot, and declared that he would divorce his dastardly soul from his body, should he ever be incommoded or affronted with another instance of his baseborn apprehension.

Though there was some risk in carrying on the altercation at this juncture, Timothy, having bound up his jaws, could not withstand the inclination he had to confute his master. He therefore, in a muttering accent, protested, that, if the knight would give him leave, he should prove that his honour had tied a knot with his tongue, which he could not untie with all his teeth. "How, caitiff!" cried Sir Launcelot, "presume to contend with me in argument?" "Your mouth is scarce shut," said the other, "since you declared that a man was not to be pun-

ished for madness, because it was a distemper. Now I will maintain that cowardice is a distemper, as well as madness; for nobody would be afraid, if he could help it." "There is more logic in that remark," resumed the knight, "than I expected from your clod-pate, Crabshaw. But I must explain the difference between cowardice and madness. Cowardice, though sometimes the effect of natural imbecility, is generally a prejudice of education, or bad habit contracted from misinformation, or misapprehension; and may certainly be cured by experience, and the exercise of reason. But this remedy cannot be applied in madness, which is a privation or disorder of reason itself."

"So is cowardice, as I 'm a living soul," exclaimed the squire; "don't you say a man is frightened out of his senses? for my peart, measter, I can neither see nor hear, much less argufy, when I 'm in such a quandary. Wherefore, I do believe, odds bodikins! that cowardice and madness are both distempers, and differ no more than the hot and cold fits of an ague. When it teakes your honour, you 're all heat, and fire, and fury, Lord bless us! but when it catches poor Tim, he 's cold and dead-hearted, he sheakes and shivers like an aspen leaf, that he does." "In that case," answered the knight, "I shall not punish you for the distemper which you cannot help, but for engaging in a service exposed to perils, when you knew your own infirmity; in the same manner as a man deserves punishment, who enlists himself for a soldier, while he labours under any secret disease." "At that rate," said the squire, "my bread is like to

be rarely buttered o' both sides, i' faith. But, I hope, as by the blessing of God I have run mad, so I shall in good time grow valiant, under your honour's precept and example."

By this time a very disagreeable night was succeeded by a fair bright morning, and a market-town appeared at the distance of three or four miles, when Crabshaw, having no longer the fear of hobgoblins before his eyes, and being moreover cheered by the sight of a place where he hoped to meet with comfortable entertainment, began to talk big, to expatiate on the folly of being afraid, and finally set all danger at defiance; when all of a sudden he was presented with an opportunity of putting in practice those new-adopted maxims. In an opening between two lanes, they perceived a gentleman's coach stopped by two highwaymen on horseback, one of whom advanced to reconnoitre and keep the coast clear, while the other exacted contribution from the travellers in the coach. He who acted as sentinel, no sooner saw our adventurer appearing from the lane, than he rode up with a pistol in his hand, and ordered him to halt on pain of immediate death.

To this peremptory mandate the knight made no other reply than charging him with such impetuosity, that he was unhorsed in a twinkling, and lay sprawling on the ground, seemingly sore bruised with his fall. Sir Launcelot, commanding Timothy to alight and secure the prisoner, couched his lance, and rode full speed at the other highwayman, who was not a little disturbed at sight of such an appari-

tion. Nevertheless, he fired his pistol without effect; and, clapping spurs to his horse, fled away at full gallop. The knight pursued him with all the speed that Bronzomarte could exert; but the robber, being mounted on a swift hunter, kept him at a distance; and, after a chase of several miles, escaped through a wood so entangled with coppice, that Sir Launcelot thought proper to desist. He then, for the first time, recollected the situation in which he had left the other thief, and, remembering to have heard a female shriek, as he passed by the coach window, resolved to return with all expedition, that he might make a proffer of his service to the lady, according to the obligation of knight-errantry. But he had lost his way; and after an hour's ride, during which he traversed many a field, and circled divers hedges, he found himself in the market-town aforementioned. Here the first object that presented itself to his eyes was Crabshaw, on foot, surrounded by a mob, tearing his hair, stamping with his feet, and roaring out in manifest distraction, "Show me the mayor! for the love of God, show me the mayor! — O Gilbert, Gilbert! a murrain take thee, Gilbert! sure thou wast foaled for my destruction!"

From these exclamations, and the antique dress of the squire, the people, not without reason, concluded that the poor soul had lost his wits; and the beadle was just going to secure him, when the knight interposed, and at once attracted the whole attention of the populace. Timothy seeing his master fell down on his knees, crying, "The thief has run away with Gilbert — you may pound me into a peast, as the

saying is. But now I'se as mad as your worship, I an't afeard of the divil and all his works." Sir Launcelot desiring the beadle would forbear, was instantly obeyed by that officer, who had no inclination to put the authority of his place in competition with the power of such a figure, armed at all points, mounted on a fiery steed, and ready for the combat. He ordered Crabshaw to attend him to the next inn, where he alighted; then, taking him into a separate apartment, demanded an explanation of the unconnected words he had uttered.

The squire was in such agitation, that, with infinite difficulty, and by dint of a thousand different questions, his master learned the adventure to this effect. Crabshaw, according to Sir Launcelot's command, had alighted from his horse, and drawn his cutlass, in hope of intimidating the discomfited robber into a tame surrender, though he did not at all relish the nature of the service. But the thief was neither so much hurt nor so tame as Timothy had imagined. He started on his feet with his pistol still in his hand; and presenting it to the squire, swore with dreadful imprecations, that he would blow his brains out in an instant. Crabshaw, unwilling to hazard the trial of this experiment, turned his back, and fled with great precipitation; while the robber, whose horse had run away, mounted Gilbert, and rode off across the country. It was at this period, that two footmen, belonging to the coach, who had stayed behind to take their morning's whet at the inn where they lodged, came up to the assistance of the ladies, armed with blunderbusses; and

the carriage proceeded, leaving Timothy alone in distraction and despair. He knew not which way to turn, and was afraid of remaining on the spot, lest the robbers should come back and revenge themselves upon him for the disappointment they had undergone. In this distress, the first thought that occurred was to make the best of his way to the town, and demand the assistance of the civil magistrate towards the retrieval of what he had lost; a design which he executed in such a manner, as justly entailed upon him the imputation of lunacy.

While Timothy stood fronting the window, and answering the interrogations of his master, he suddenly exclaimed, "Bodikins! there's Gilbert!" and sprung into the street with incredible agility. There finding his strayed companion brought back by one of the footmen who attended the coach, he imprinted a kiss on his forehead; and, hanging about his neck, with the tears in his eyes, hailed his return with the following salutation: "Art thou come back, my darling? ah, Gilbert, Gilbert! a pize upon thee! thou hadst like to have been a dear Gilbert to me! how couldst thou break the heart of thy old friend, who has known thee from a colt? seven years next grass have I fed thee and bred thee; provided thee with sweet hay, delicate corn, and fresh litter, that thou mought lie warm, dry, and comfortable. Han't I currycombed thy carcass till it was as sleek as a sloe, and cherished thee as the apple of mine eye? for all that thou hast played me an hundred dog's tricks; biting, and kicking, and plunging, as if the devil was in thy body; and now thou couldst run away with

a thief, and leave me to be flayed alive by measter. What canst thou say for thyself, thou cruel, hard-hearted, unchristian tuoad?" To this tender expostulation, which afforded much entertainment to the boys, Gilbert answered not one word; but seemed altogether insensible to the caresses of Timothy, who forthwith led him into the stable. On the whole, he seems to have been an unsocial animal; for it does not appear that he ever contracted any degree of intimacy, even with Bronzomarte, during the whole course of their acquaintance and fellowship. On the contrary, he has been more than once known to signify his aversion, by throwing out behind, and other eruptive marks of contempt for that elegant charger, who excelled him as much in personal merit, as his rider Timothy was outshone by his all-accomplished master.

While the squire accommodated Gilbert in the stable, the knight sent for the footman who had brought him back; and, having presented him with a liberal acknowledgment, desired to know in what manner the horse had been retrieved.

The stranger satisfied him in this particular, by giving him to understand, that the highwayman, perceiving himself pursued across the country, plied Gilbert so severely with whip and spur, that the animal resented the usage, and being besides, perhaps, a little struck with remorse for having left his old friend Crabshaw, suddenly halted, and stood stock still, notwithstanding all the stripes and tortures he underwent; or if he moved at all, it was in a rotrograde direction. The thief,

seeing all his endeavours ineffectual, and himself in danger of being overtaken, wisely quitted his acquisition, and fled into the bosom of a neighbouring wood.

Then the knight inquired about the situation of the lady in the coach, and offered himself as her guard and conductor; but was told that she was already safely lodged in the house of a gentleman at some distance from the road. He likewise learned that she was a person disordered in her senses, under the care and tuition of a widow lady, her relation, and that in a day or two they should pursue their journey northward to the place of her habitation.

After the footman had been some time dismissed, the knight recollected that he had forgot to ask the name of the person to whom he belonged; and began to be uneasy at this omission, which indeed was more interesting than he could imagine. For an explanation of this nature would, in all likelihood, have led to a discovery, that the lady in the coach was no other than Miss Aurelia Darnel, who seeing him unexpectedly in such an equipage and attitude, as he passed the coach, for his helmet was off, had screamed with surprise and terror, and fainted away. Nevertheless, when she recovered from her swoon, she concealed the real cause of her agitation, and none of her attendants were acquainted with the person of Sir Launcelot.

The circumstances of the disorder under which she was said to labour shall be revealed in due course. In the meantime, our adventurer, though unaccount-

ably affected, never dreamed of such an occurrence; but being very much fatigued, resolved to indemnify himself for the loss of last night's repose; and this happened to be one of the few things in which Crabshaw felt an ambition to follow his master's example.

CHAPTER NINE

WHICH MAY SERVE TO SHOW, THAT TRUE PATRIOTISM IS OF NO PARTY.

THE knight had not enjoyed his repose above two hours, when he was disturbed by such a variety of noises, as might have discomposed a brain of the firmest texture. The rumbling of carriages, and the rattling of horses' feet on the pavement, was intermingled with loud shouts, and the noise of fiddle, French horn, and bagpipe. A loud peal was heard ringing in the church tower, at some distance, while the inn resounded with clamour, confusion, and uproar.

Sir Launcelot being thus alarmed, started from his bed, and running to the window, beheld a cavalcade of persons well mounted, and distinguished by blue cockades. They were generally attired like jockies, with gold-laced hats and buckskin breeches, and one of them bore a standard of blue silk, inscribed in white letters, LIBERTY AND THE LANDED INTEREST. He who rode at their head was a jolly figure, of a florid complexion and round belly, seemingly turned of fifty, and, in all appearance, of a choleric disposition. As they approached the market-place, they waved their hats, huzzaed, and cried aloud, NO FOREIGN CONNEXIONS! — OLD ENGLAND

FOR EVER! This acclamation, however, was not so loud or universal, but that our adventurer could distinctly hear a counter-cry from the populace of, No SLAVERY! — No POPISH PRETENDER! an insinuation so ill relished by the cavaliers, that they began to ply their horsewhips among the multitude, and were, in their turn, saluted with a discharge or volley of stones, dirt, and dead cats; in consequence of which some teeth were demolished, and many surtouts defiled.

Our adventurer's attention was soon called off from this scene, to contemplate another procession of people on foot, adorned with bunches of orange ribbons, attended by a regular band of music, playing *God save great George our King*, and headed by a thin swarthy personage, of a sallow aspect, and large goggling eyes, arched over with two thick semicircles of hair, or rather bristles, jet black, and frowsy. His apparel was very gorgeous, though his address was very awkward; he was accompanied by the mayor, recorder, and heads of the corporation, in their formalities. His ensigns were known by the inscription, *Liberty of Conscience, and the Protestant Succession;* and the people saluted him as he passed with repeated cheers, that seemed to prognosticate success. He had particularly ingratiated himself with the good women, who lined the street, and sent forth many ejaculatory petitions in his favour.

Sir Launcelot immediately comprehended the meaning of this solemnity. He perceived it was the prelude to the election of a member to represent the county in parliament, and he was seized with an

eager desire to know the names and characters of the competitors.

In order to gratify this desire, he made repeated application to the bell-rope that depended from the ceiling of his apartment; but this produced nothing, except the repetition of the words, "Coming, sir," which echoed from three or four different corners of the house. The waiters were so distracted by a variety of calls, that they stood motionless, in the state of the schoolman's ass between two bundles of hay, incapable of determining where they should first offer their attendance.

Our knight's patience was almost exhausted, when Crabshaw entered the room, in a very strange equipage. One half of his face appeared close shaved, and the other covered with lather, while the blood trickled in two rivulets from his nose, upon a barber's cloth that was tucked under his chin; he looked grim with indignation, and under his left arm carried his cutlass, unsheathed. Where he had acquired so much of the profession of knight-errantry we shall not pretend to determine; but certain it is, he fell on his knees before Sir Launcelot, crying, with an accent of grief and distraction, "In the name of St. George for England, I beg a boon, Sir Knight, and thy compliance I demand, before the peacock and the ladies."

Sir Launcelot, astonished at this address, replied in a lofty strain, "Valiant squire, thy boon is granted, provided it doth not contravene the laws of the land, and the constitution of chivalry." "Then I crave leave," answered Crabshaw, "to challenge

and defy to mortal combat that caitiff barber who hath left me in this piteous condition; and I vow by the peacock, that I will not shave my beard, until I have shaved his head from his shoulders. So may I thrive in the occupation of an arrant squire."

Before his master had time to inquire into particulars, they were joined by a decent man in boots, who was likewise a traveller, and had seen the rise and progress of Timothy's disaster. He gave the knight to understand, that Crabshaw had sent for a barber, and already undergone one half of the operation, when the operator received the long-expected message from both the gentlemen who stood candidates at the election. The double summons was no sooner intimated to him, than he threw down his bason, and retired with precipitation, leaving the squire in the suds. Timothy, incensed at this desertion, followed him with equal celerity into the street, where he collared the shaver, and insisted upon being entirely trimmed, on pain of the bastinado. The other finding himself thus arrested, and having no time to spare for altercation, lifted up his fist, and discharged it upon the snout of Crabshaw with such force, that the unfortunate aggressor was fain to bite the ground, while the victor hastened away, in hope of touching the double wages of corruption.

The knight being informed of these circumstances, told Timothy with a smile, that he should have liberty to defy the barber; but, in the meantime, he ordered him to saddle Bronzomarte, and prepare for immediate service. While the squire was thus employed, his master engaged in conversation with

the stranger, who happened to be a London dealer travelling for orders, and was well acquainted with the particulars which our adventurer wanted to know.

It was from this communicative tradesman he learned, that the competitors were Sir Valentine Quickset and Mr. Isaac Vanderpelft; the first a mere fox-hunter, who depended for success in his election upon his interest among the high-flying gentry; the other a stock-jobber and contractor of foreign extract, not without a mixture of Hebrew blood, immensely rich, who was countenanced by his Grace of——, and supposed to have distributed large sums in securing a majority of votes among the yeomanry of the county, possessed of small freeholds, and copyholders, a great number of which last resided in this borough. He said these were generally dissenters and weavers; and that the mayor, who was himself a manufacturer, had received a very considerable order for exportation, in consequence of which it was believed he would support Mr. Vanderpelft with all his influence and credit.

Sir Launcelot, roused at this intelligence, called for his armour, which being buckled on in a hurry, he mounted his steed, attended by Crabshaw on Gilbert, and rode immediately into the midst of the multitude by which the hustings were surrounded, just as Sir Valentine Quickset began to harangue the people from an occasional theatre, formed of a plank supported by the upper board of the public stocks, and an inferior rib of a wooden cage pitched also for the accommodation of petty delinquents.

SIR VALENTINE'S HARANGUE

Though the singular appearance of Sir Launcelot at first attracted the eyes of all the spectators, yet they did not fail to yield attention to the speech of his brother-knight, Sir Valentine, which ran in the following strain: — "Gentlemen vreeholders of this here county, I shan't pretend to meake a vine flourishing speech — I'm a plain-spoken man, as you all know. I hope I shall always speak my maind without vear or vavour, as the zaying is. 'T is the way of the Quicksets — we are no upstarts, nor vorreigners, nor have we any Jewish blood in our veins; we have lived in this here neighbourhood time out of mind, as you all know, and possess an estate of vive thousand clear, which we spend at whoam, among you, in old English hospitality. All my vorevathers have been parliament-men, and I can prove that ne'er a one o' um gave a zingle vote for the court since the Revolution. Vor my own peart, I value not the ministry three skips of a louse, as the zaying is — I ne'er knew but one minister that was an honest man, and vor all the rest, I care not if they were hanged as high as Haman, with a pox to' un. I am, thank God, a vree-born, true-hearted Englishman, and a loyal, thof unworthy, son of the Church — vor all they have done vor H—r, I'd vain know what they have done vor the Church, with a vengeance — vor my own peart, I hate all vorreigners and vorreign measures, whereby this poor nation is broken-backed with a dismal load of debt, and the taxes rise so high that the poor cannot get bread. Gentlemen vreeholders of this county, I value no minister a vig's end, d'ye

see; if you will favour me with your votes and interest, whereby I may be returned, I 'll engage one half of my estate that I never cry yea to your shillings in the pound, but will cross the ministry in everything, as in duty bound, and as becomes an honest freeholder in the ould interest — but, if you sell your votes and your country for hire, you will be detested in this here world, and damned in the next to all eternity: so I leave every man to his own conscience."

This eloquent oration was received by his own friends with loud peals of applause, which, however, did not discourage his competitor, who, confident of his own strength, ascended the rostrum, or, in other words, an old cask, set upright for the purpose. Having bowed all round to the audience, with a smile of gentle condescension, he told them how ambitious he was of the honour to represent this county in parliament, and how happy he found himself in the encouragement of his friends, who had so unanimously agreed to support his pretensions. He said, over and above the qualifications he possessed among them, he had fourscore thousand pounds in his pocket, which he had acquired by commerce, the support of the nation, under the present happy establishment, in defence of which he was ready to spend the last farthing. He owned himself a faithful subject to his Majesty King George, sincerely attached to the Protestant succession, in detestation and defiance of a popish, an abjured, and outlawed Pretender; and declared that he would exhaust his substance and his blood, if necessary,

in maintaining the principles of the glorious Revolution. "This," cried he, "is the solid basis and foundation upon which I stand."

These last words had scarce proceeded from his mouth, when the head of the barrel or puncheon on which he stood, being frail and infirm, gave way, so that down he went with a crash, and in a twinkling disappeared from the eyes of the astonished beholders. The fox-hunters, perceiving his disaster, exclaimed, in the phrase and accent of the chase, "Stole away! stole away!" and with hideous vociferation, joined in the sylvan chorus which the hunters halloo when the hounds are at fault.

The disaster of Mr. Vanderpelft was soon repaired by the assiduity of his friends, who disengaged him from the barrel in a trice, hoisted him on the shoulders of four strong weavers, and, resenting the unmannerly exultation of their antagonists, began to form themselves in order of battle.

An obstinate fray would have undoubtedly ensued, had not their mutual indignation given way to their curiosity, at the motion of our knight, who had advanced into the middle between the two fronts, and waving his hand as a signal for them to give attention, addressed himself to them, with graceful demeanour, in these words: — "Countrymen, friends, and fellow-citizens, you are this day assembled to determine a point of the utmost consequence to yourselves and your posterity; a point that ought to be determined by far other weapons than brutal force and factious clamour. You, the freemen of England, are the basis of that excellent constitution which hath

long flourished the object of envy and admiration. To you belongs the inestimable privilege of choosing a delegate properly qualified to represent you in the High Court of Parliament. This is your birthright, inherited from your ancestors, obtained by their courage, and sealed with their blood. It is not only your birthright, which you should maintain in defiance of all danger, but also a sacred trust, to be executed with the most scrupulous care and fidelity. The person whom you trust ought not only to be endued with the most inflexible integrity, but should likewise possess a fund of knowledge that may enable him to act as a part of the legislature. He must be well acquainted with the history, the constitution, and the laws of his country; he must understand the forms of business, the extent of the royal prerogative, the privilege of parliament, the detail of government, the nature and regulation of the finances, the different branches of commerce, the politics that prevail, and the connexions that subsist among the different powers of Europe; for on all these subjects the deliberations of a House of Commons occasionally turn.

"But these great purposes will never be answered by electing an illiterate savage, scarce qualified, in point of understanding, to act as a country justice of peace, a man who has scarce ever travelled beyond the excursion of a fox-chase, whose conversation never rambles farther than his stable, his kennel, and the barnyard; who rejects decorum as degeneracy, mistakes rusticity for independence, ascertains his courage by leaping over gates and ditches, and founds his triumph on feats of drinking; who holds his estate

by a factious tenure, professes himself the blind slave of a party, without knowing the principles that gave it birth, or the motives by which it is actuated, and thinks that all patriotism consists in railing indiscriminately at ministers, and obstinately opposing every measure of the administration. Such a man, with no evil intentions of his own, might be used as a dangerous tool in the hands of a desperate faction, by scattering the seeds of disaffection, embarrassing the wheels of government, and reducing the whole kingdom to anarchy."

Here the knight was interrupted by the shouts and acclamations of the Vanderpelfites, who cried aloud, "Hear him! hear him! long life to the iron-cased orator." This clamour subsiding, he prosecuted his harangue to the following effect: —

"Such a man as I have described may be dangerous from ignorance, but is neither so mischievous, nor so detestable as the wretch who knowingly betrays his trust, and sues to be the hireling and prostitute of a weak and worthless minister; a sordid knave, without honour or principle, who belongs to no family whose example can reproach him with degeneracy, who has no country to command his respect, no friend to engage his affection, no religion to regulate his morals, no conscience to restrain his iniquity, and who worships no God but Mammon; an insinuating miscreant, who undertakes for the dirtiest work of the vilest administration; who practises national usury, receiving by wholesale the rewards of venality, and distributing the wages of corruption by retail."

In this place our adventurer's speech was drowned in the acclamations of the fox-hunters, who now triumphed in their turn, and hoicksed the speaker, exclaiming, "Well opened, Jowler — to' un, to' un again, Sweetlips! hey, Merry, Whitefoot!" After a short interruption, he thus resumed his discourse: —

"When such a caitiff presents himself to you, like the devil, with a temptation in his hand, avoid him as if he were in fact the devil — it is not the offering of disinterested love, for what should induce him, who has no affections, to love you, to whose persons he is an utter stranger? alas! it is not a benevolence, but a bribe. He wants to buy you at one market that he may sell you at another. Without doubt his intention is to make an advantage of his purchase, and this aim he cannot accomplish but by sacrificing, in some sort, your interest, your independency, to the wicked designs of a minister, as he can expect no gratification for the faithful discharge of his duty. But, even if he should not find an opportunity of selling you to advantage, the crime, the shame, the infamy, will still be the same in you, who, baser than the most abandoned prostitutes, have sold yourselves and your posterity for hire — for a paltry price, to be refunded with interest by some minister, who will indemnify himself out of your own pockets; for, after all, you are bought and sold with your own money — the miserable pittance you may now receive is no more than a pitcher full of water thrown in to moisten the sucker of that pump which will drain you to the bottom. Let me therefore advise and exhort you, my countrymen, to avoid the opposite

extremes of the ignorant clown and the designing courtier, and choose a man of honesty, intelligence, and moderation, who will"—

The doctrine of moderation was a very unpopular subject in such an assembly; and, accordingly, they rejected it as one man. They began to think the stranger wanted to set up for himself; a supposition that could not fail to incense both sides equally, as they were both zealously engaged in their respective causes. The Whigs and the Tories joined against this intruder, who, being neither, was treated like a monster, or chimera in politics. They hissed, they hooted, and they hallooed; they annoyed him with missiles of dirt, sticks, and stones; they cursed, they threatened and reviled, till, at length, his patience was exhausted.

"Ungrateful and abandoned miscreants!" he cried, "I spoke to you as men and Christians — as free-born Britons and fellow-citizens; but I perceive you are a pack of venal, infamous scoundrels, and I will treat you accordingly." So saying, he brandished his lance, and riding into the thickest of the concourse, laid about him with such dexterity and effect, that the multitude was immediately dispersed, and he retired without further molestation.

The same good fortune did not attend squire Crabshaw in his retreat. The ludicrous singularity of his features, and the half-mown crop of hair that bristled from one side of his countenance, invited some wags to make merry at his expense; one of them clapped a furze-bush under the tail of Gilbert, who, feeling himself thus stimulated *a posteriori*,

kicked and plunged, and capered in such a manner, that Timothy could hardly keep the saddle. In this commotion he lost his cap and his periwig, while the rabble pelted him in such a manner, that, before he could join his master, he looked like a pillar, or rather a pillory of mud.

CHAPTER TEN

WHICH SHOWETH THAT HE WHO PLAYS AT BOWLS, WILL SOMETIMES MEET WITH RUBBERS.

SIR LAUNCELOT, boiling with indignation at the venality and faction of the electors, whom he had harangued to so little purpose, retired with the most deliberate disdain towards one of the gates of the town, on the outside of which his curiosity was attracted by a concourse of people, in the midst of whom stood Mr. Ferret, mounted upon a stool, with a kind of satchel hanging round his neck, and a phial displayed in his right hand, while he held forth to the audience in a very vehement strain of elocution.

Crabshaw thought himself happily delivered when he reached the suburbs, and proceeded without halting; but his master mingled with the crowd, and heard the orator express himself to this effect:—

"Very likely you may undervalue me and my medicine, because I don't appear upon a stage of rotten boards, in a shabby velvet coat, and tie-periwig, with a foolish fellow in a motley coat, to make you laugh, by making wry faces; but I scorn to use these dirty arts for engaging your attention. These paltry tricks, *ad captandum vulgus*, can have

no effect but on idiots; and if you are idiots, I don't desire you should be my customers. Take notice, I don't address you in the style of a mountebank, or a High German doctor; and yet the kingdom is full of mountebanks, empirics, and quacks. We have quacks in religion, quacks in physic, quacks in law, quacks in politics, quacks in patriotism, quacks in government — High German quacks, that have blistered, sweated, bled, and purged the nation into an atrophy. But this is not all; they have not only evacuated her into a consumption, but they have intoxicated her brain, until she is become delirious; she can no longer pursue her own interest, or, indeed, rightly distinguish it. Like the people of Nineveh, she can hardly tell her right hand from her left; but, as a changeling, is dazzled and delighted by an *ignis fatuus*, a Will-o'-the-wisp, an exhalation from the vilest materials in nature, that leads her astray through Westphalian bogs and deserts, and will one day break her neck over some barren rocks, or leave her sticking in some H—n pit, or quagmire.

"For my part, if you have a mind to betray your country, I have no objection. In selling yourselves and your fellow-citizens, you only dispose of a pack of rascals who deserve to be sold. If you sell one another, why should not I sell this here Elixir of Long Life, which, if properly used, will protract your days till you shall have seen your country ruined. I shall not pretend to disturb your understandings, which are none of the strongest, with a hotchpotch of unintelligible terms, such as Aristotle's four principles of generation, unformed matter, privation, effi-

cient, and final causes. Aristotle was a pedantic blockhead, and still more knave than fool. The same censure we may safely put on that wiseacre, Dioscorides, with his faculties of simples — his seminal, specific, and principal virtues; and that crazy commentator, Galen, with his four elements, elementary qualities, his eight complexions, his harmonies and discords. Nor shall I expatiate on the alkahest of that mad scoundrel, Paracelsus, with which he pretended to reduce flints into salt; nor *archæus* or *spiritus rector* of that visionary Van Helmont, his simple, elementary water, his *gas*, ferments, and transmutations; nor shall I enlarge upon the salt, sulphur, and oil, the *acidum vagum*, the mercury of metals, and the volatilised vitriol of other modern chemists, a pack of ignorant, conceited, knavish rascals, that puzzle your weak heads with such jargon, just as [a] Germanised m—r throws dust in your eyes, by lugging in and ringing the changes on the balance of power, the Protestant religion, and your allies on the continent; acting like the juggler, who picks your pockets while he dazzles your eyes and amuses your fancy with twirling his fingers and reciting the gibberish of *hocus pocus;* for, in fact, the balance of power is a mere chimera. As for the Protestant religion, nobody gives himself any trouble about it; and allies on the continent, we have none, or, at least, none that would raise an hundred men to save us from perdition, unless we paid an extravagant price for their assistance.

"But, to return to this here Elixir of Long Life, I might embellish it with a great many high-sounding

epithets; but I disdain to follow the example of every illiterate vagabond, that, from idleness, turns quack, and advertises his nostrum in the public papers. I am neither a felonious drysalter returned from exile, an hospital stump-turner, a decayed staymaker, a bankrupt printer, or insolvent debtor, released by act of parliament. I do not pretend to administer medicines without the least tincture of letters, or suborn wretches to perjure themselves in false affidavits of cures that were never performed; nor employ a set of led captains to harangue in my praise at all public places. I was bred regularly to the profession of chemistry, and have tried all the processes of alchemy; and I may venture to say, that this here elixir is, in fact, the *chruseon pepuromenon ek puros*, the visible, glorious, spiritual body, from whence all other beings derive their existence, as proceeding from their father the sun, and their mother the moon; from the sun, as from a living and spiritual gold, which is mere fire; consequently, the common and universal first-created mover, from whence all moveable things have their distinct and particular motions; and also from the moon, as from the wife of the sun, and the common mother of all sublunary things.

"And forasmuch as man is, and must be, the comprehensive end of all creatures, and the microcosm, he is counselled in the Revelation to buy gold that is thoroughly fired, or rather pure fire, that he may become rich and like the sun; as, on the contrary, he becomes poor, when he abuses the arsenical poison; so that, his silver, by the fire, must be cal-

cined to a *caput mortuum*, which happens when he will hold and retain the menstruum, out of which he partly exists, for his own property, and doth not daily offer up the same in the fire of the sun, that the woman may be clothed with the sun, and become a sun, and thereby rule over the moon; that is to say, that he may get the moon under his feet. Now, this here elixir, sold for no more than sixpence a phial, contains the essence of the alkahest, the archæus, the catholicon, the menstruum, the sun, the moon, and, to sum up all in one word, is the true, genuine, unadulterated, unchangeable, immaculate, and specific *chruseon pepuromenon ek puros.*"

The audience were variously affected by this learned oration. Some of those who favoured the pretensions of the Whig candidate, were of opinion, that he ought to be punished for his presumption, in reflecting so scurrilously on ministers and measures. Of this sentiment was our adventurer, though he could not help admiring the courage of the orator, and owning within himself, that he had mixed some melancholy truths with his scurrility.

Mr. Ferret would not have stood so long in his rostrum unmolested, had not he cunningly chosen his station immediately without the jurisdiction of the town, whose magistrates therefore could not take cognisance of his conduct; but application was made to the constable of the other parish, while our nostrum-monger proceeded in his speech, the conclusion of which produced such an effect upon his hearers, that his whole cargo was immediately exhausted. He had just stepped down from his stool, when the constable

with his staff arrived, and took him under his guidance. Mr. Ferret, on this occasion, attempted to interest the people in his behalf, by exhorting them to vindicate the liberty of the subject against such an act of oppression; but finding them deaf to the tropes and figures of his elocution, he addressed himself to our knight, reminding him of his duty to protect the helpless and the injured, and earnestly soliciting his interposition.

Sir Launcelot, without making the least reply to his entreaties, resolved to see the end of this adventure; and, being joined by his squire, followed the prisoner at a distance, measuring back the ground he had travelled the day before, until he reached another small borough, where Ferret was housed in the common prison.

While he sat a-horseback, deliberating on the next step he should take, he was accosted by the voice of Tom Clarke, who called, in a whimpering tone, through a window grated with iron, "For the love of God, Sir Launcelot, do, dear sir, be so good as to take the trouble to alight, and come upstairs; I have something to communicate, of consequence to the community in general, and you in particular. Pray do, dear Sir Knight. I beg a boon in the name of St. Michael and St. George for England."

Our adventurer, not a little surprised at this address, dismounted without hesitation, and, being admitted to the common jail, there found not only his old friend Tom, but also the uncle, sitting on a bench, with a woollen night-cap on his head, and a pair of spectacles on his nose, reading very earnestly

in a book, which he afterwards understood was entitled, *The Life and Adventures of Valentine and Orson.* The captain no sooner saw his great pattern enter, than he rose, and received him with the salutation of, "What cheer, brother?" and before the knight could answer, added these words: "You see how the land lies — here have Tom and I been fast ashore these four-and-twenty hours; and this berth we have got by attempting to tow your galley, brother, from the enemy's harbour. Adds bobs! if we had this here fellow w—eson for a consort, with all our tackle in order, brother, we 'd soon show 'em the top-sail, slip our cable, and down with their barricadoes. But, howsomever, it don't signify talking — patience is a good stream-anchor, and will hold, as the saying is — but, d—n my — as for the matter of my bolt-sprit. — Harkye, harkye, brother, d—ned hard to engage with three at a time, one upon my bow, one upon my quarter, and one right a-head, rubbing and drubbing, lying athwart hawse, raking fore and aft, battering and grappling, and lashing and clashing — adds heart, brother; crash went the bolt-sprit — down came the round-top — up with the dead-lights — I saw nothing but the stars at noon, lost the helm of my seven senses, and down I broached upon my broadside."

As Mr. Clarke rightly conceived that his uncle would need an interpreter, he began to explain these hints, by giving a circumstantial detail of his own and the captain's disaster.

He told Sir Launcelot, that, notwithstanding all his persuasion and remonstrances, Captain Crowe

insisted upon appearing in the character of a knight-errant; and, with that view, had set out from the public-house on the morning that succeeded his vigil in the church. That upon the highway they had met with a coach, containing two ladies, one of whom seemed to be under great agitation; for, as they passed, she struggled with the other, thrust out her head at the window, and said something which he could not distinctly hear. That Captain Crowe was struck with admiration of her unequalled beauty; and he, Tom, no sooner informed him who she was, than he resolved to set her at liberty, on the supposition that she was under restraint, and in distress. That he accordingly unsheathed his cutlass, and, riding after the coach, commanded the driver to bring to, on pain of death. That one of the servants, believing the captain to be a highwayman, presented a blunderbuss, and in all probability would have shot him on the spot, had not he, the nephew, rode up, and assured them the gentleman was *non compos*. That, notwithstanding his intimation, all the three attacked him with the butt-ends of their horsewhips, while the coach drove on, and although he laid about him with great fury, at last brought him to the ground, by a stroke on the temple. That Mr. Clarke himself then interposed in defence of his kinsman, and was also severely beaten. That two of the servants, upon application to a justice of the peace, residing near the field of battle, had granted a warrant against the captain and his nephew, and, without examination, committed them as idle vagrants, after having seized their horses and their

money, on pretence of their being suspected for highwaymen.

"But, as there was no just cause of suspicion," added he, "I am of opinion, the justice is guilty of a trespass, and may be sued for *falsum imprisonamentum*, and considerable damages obtained; for you will please to observe, sir, no justice has a right to commit any person till after due examination; besides, we were not committed for an assault and battery, *audita querela*, nor as wandering lunatics by the statute, who, to be sure, may be apprehended by a justice's warrant, and locked up and chained, if necessary, or to be sent to their last legal settlement; but we were committed as vagrants and suspected highwaymen. Now we do not fall under the description of vagrants; nor did any circumstance appear to support the suspicion of robbery; for, to constitute robbery, there must be something taken; but here nothing was taken but blows, and they were upon compulsion. Even an attempt to rob, without any taking, is not felony, but a misdemeanour. To be sure, there is a taking in deed, and a taking in law. But still the robber must be in possession of a thing stolen; and we attempted to steal ourselves away. My uncle, indeed, would have released the young lady *vi et armis*, had his strength been equal to his inclination; and in so doing, I would have willingly lent my assistance, both from a desire to serve such a beautiful young creature, and also in regard to your honour, for I thought I heard her call upon your name."

"Ha! how! what! whose name? say, speak — Heaven and earth!" cried the knight, with marks of

the most violent emotion. — Clarke, terrified at his looks, replied, "I beg your pardon a thousand times; I did not say positively she did speak those words; but I apprehended she did speak them. Words, which may be taken or interpreted by law in a general or common sense, ought not to receive a strained or unusual construction; and ambiguous words"— "Speak, or be dumb for ever!" exclaimed Sir Launcelot, in a terrific tone, laying his hand on his sword. "What young lady, ha? What name did she call upon?" — Clarke, falling on his knees, answered, not without stammering, "Miss Aurelia Darnel; to the best of my recollection, she called upon Sir Launcelot Greaves."— "Sacred powers!" cried our adventurer, "which way did the carriage proceed?"

When Tom told him that the coach quitted the postroad, and struck away to the right at full speed, Sir Launcelot was seized with a pensive fit; his head sunk upon his breast, and he mused in silence for several minutes, with the most melancholy expression on his countenance; then recollecting himself, he assumed a more composed and cheerful air, and asked several questions with respect to the arms on the coach, and the liveries worn by the servants? It was in the course of this interrogation, that he discovered he had actually conversed with one of the footmen, who had brought back Crabshaw's horse. A circumstance that filled him with anxiety and chagrin, as he had omitted to inquire the name of his master, and the place to which the coach was travelling; though, in all probability, had he made these inquiries, he would have received very little

satisfaction, there being reason to think the servants were enjoined secrecy.

The knight, in order to meditate on this unexpected adventure, sat down by his old friend, and entered into a reverie, which lasted about a quarter of an hour, and might have continued longer had it not been interrupted by the voice of Crabshaw, who bawled aloud, "Look to it, my masters — as you brew you must drink — this shall be a dear day's work to some of you; for my part, I say nothing — the braying ass eats little grass — one barber shaves not so close, but another finds a few stubble — you wanted to catch a capon, and you 've stole a cat — he that takes up his lodgings in a stable, must be contented to lie upon litter."

The knight, desirous of knowing the cause that prompted Timothy to apothegmatise in this manner, looked through the grate, and perceived the squire fairly set in the stocks, surrounded by a mob of people. When he called to him, and asked the reason of this disgraceful restraint, Crabshaw replied, "There 's no cake, but there 's another of the same make — who never climbed, never fell — after clouds comes clear weather. 'T is all along of your honour, I 've met with this preferment; no deservings of my own, but the interest of my master. Sir Knight, if you will slay the justice, hang the constable, release your squire, and burn the town, your name will be famous in story; but, if you are content, I am thankful. Two hours are soon spent in such good company; in the meantime, look to 'un, jailor, there 's a frog in the stocks."

Sir Launcelot, incensed at this affront offered to his servant, advanced to the prison door, but found it fast locked; and when he called to the turnkey, he was given to understand, that he himself was prisoner. Enraged at this intimation, he demanded at whose suit, and was answered through the wicket, "At the suit of the King, in whose name I will hold you fast, with God's assistance."

The knight's looks now began to lighten; he rolled his eyes around; and snatching up an oaken bench, which three ordinary men could scarce have lifted from the ground, he, in all likelihood, would have shattered the door in pieces, had not he been restrained by the interposition of Mr. Clarke, who entreated him to have a little patience, assuring him he would suggest a plan that would avenge himself amply on the justice, without any breach of the peace. "I say the justice," added Tom, "because it must be his doing. He is a little petulant sort of a fellow, ignorant of the law, guilty of numberless irregularities, and if properly managed, may, for this here act of arbitrary power, be not only cast in a swingeing sum, but even turned out of the commission with disgrace."

This was a very seasonable hint, in consequence of which the bench was softly replaced, and Captain Crowe deposited the poker, with which he had armed himself, to second the efforts of Sir Launcelot. They now, for the first time, perceived that Ferret had disappeared; and, upon inquiry, found that he was in fact the occasion of the knight's detention and the squire's disgrace.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DESCRIPTION OF A MODERN MAGISTRATE.

BEFORE the knight would take any resolution for extricating himself from his present embarrassment, he desired to be better acquainted with the character and circumstances of the justice by whom he had been confined, and likewise to understand the meaning of his own detention. To be informed in this last particular, he renewed his dialogue with the turnkey, who told him through the grate, that Ferret no sooner perceived him in the jail without his offensive arms, which he had left below, than he desired to be carried before the justice, where he had given information against the knight, as a violator of the public peace, who strolled about the country with unlawful arms, rendering the highways unsafe, encroaching upon the freedom of elections, putting his majesty's liege subjects in fear of their lives, and, in all probability, harbouring more dangerous designs under an affected cloak of lunacy. Ferret, upon this information, had been released, and entertained as an evidence for the King; and Crabshaw was put into the stocks, as an idle stroller.

Sir Launcelot, being satisfied in these particulars, addressed himself to his fellow-prisoners, and begged

they would communicate what they knew respecting the worthy magistrate, who had been so premature in the execution of his office. This request was no sooner signified, than a crew of naked wretches crowded around him, and, like a congregation of rooks, opened their throats all at once, in accusation of Justice Gobble. The knight was moved at this scene, which he could not help comparing, in his own mind, to what would appear upon a much more awful occasion, when the cries of the widow and the orphan, the injured and oppressed, would be uttered at the tribunal of an unerring Judge, against the villanous and insolent authors of their calamity.

When he had, with some difficulty, quieted their clamours, and confined his interrogation to one person of a tolerably decent appearance, he learned, that Justice Gobble, whose father was a tailor, had for some time served as a journeyman hosier in London, where he had picked up some law terms, by conversing with hackney writers and attorneys' clerks of the lowest order; that, upon the death of his master, he had insinuated himself into the good graces of the widow, who took him for her husband, so that he became a person of some consideration, and saved money apace; that his pride, increasing with his substance, was reinforced by the vanity of his wife, who persuaded him to retire from business, that they might live genteelly in the country; that his father dying, and leaving a couple of houses in this town, Mr. Gobble had come down with his lady to take possession, and liked the place so well, as to make a more considerable purchase in the neighbour-

hood; that a certain peer being indebted to him in the large way of his business, and either unable or unwilling to pay the money, had compounded the debt, by inserting his name in the commission; since which period his own insolence, and his wife's ostentation, had exceeded all bounds; that, in the execution of his authority, he had committed a thousand acts of cruelty and injustice against the poorer sort of people, who were unable to call him to a proper account; that his wife domineered with a more ridiculous, though less pernicious usurpation, among the females of the place; that, in a word, she was the subject of continual mirth, and he the object of universal detestation.

Our adventurer, though extremely well disposed to believe what was said to the prejudice of Gobble, would not give entire credit to this description, without first inquiring into the particulars of his conduct. He therefore asked the speaker, what was the cause of his particular complaint. "For my own part, sir," said he, "I lived in repute, and kept a shop in this here town, well furnished with a great variety of articles. All the people in the place were my customers; but what I and many others chiefly depended upon, was the extraordinary sale at two annual customary fairs, to which all the country people in the neighbourhood resorted to lay out their money. I had employed all my stock, and even engaged my credit, to procure a large assortment of goods for the Lammas market; but, having given my vote in the election of a vestry-clerk, contrary to the interest of Justice Gobble, he resolved to work my ruin. He

suppressed the annual fairs, by which a great many people, especially publicans, earned the best part of their subsistence. The country people resorted to another town. I was overstocked with a load of perishable commodities, and found myself deprived of the best part of my home customers, by the ill-nature and revenge of the justice, who employed all his influence among the common people, making use of threats and promises, to make them desert my shop, and give their custom to another person, whom he settled in the same business under my nose. Being thus disabled from making punctual payments, my commodities spoiling, and my wife breaking her heart, I grew negligent and careless, took to drinking, and my affairs went to wreck. Being one day in liquor, and provoked by the fleers and taunts of the man who had set up against me, I struck him at his own door; upon which I was carried before the justice, who treated me with such insolence, that I became desperate, and not only abused him in the execution of his office, but also made an attempt to lay violent hands upon his person. You know, sir, when a man is both drunk and desperate, he cannot be supposed to have any command of himself. I was sent hither to jail. My creditors immediately seized my effects; and, as they were not sufficient to discharge my debts, a statute of bankruptcy was taken out against me; so that here I must lie, until they think proper to sign my certificate, or the parliament shall please to pass an act for the relief of insolvent debtors."

The next person who presented himself in the

crowd of accusers was a meagre figure, with a green apron, who told the knight that he had kept a public-house in town for a dozen years, and enjoyed a good trade, which was in a great measure owing to a skittle-ground, in which the best people of the place diverted themselves occasionally. That Justice Gobble, being disobliged at his refusing to part with a gelding which he had bred for his own use, first of all shut up the skittle-ground; but, finding the publican still kept his house open, he took care that he should be deprived of his licence, on pretence that the number of ale-houses was too great, and that this man had been bred to another employment. The poor publican being thus deprived of his bread, was obliged to try the staymaking business, to which he had served an apprenticeship; but being very ill qualified for this profession, he soon fell to decay and contracted debts, in consequence of which he was now in prison, where he had no other support but what arose from the labour of his wife, who had gone to service.

The next prisoner who preferred his complaint against the unrighteous judge was a poacher, at whose practices Justice Gobble had for some years connived, so as even to screen him from punishment, in consideration of being supplied with game gratis, till at length he was disappointed by accident. His lady had invited guests to an entertainment, and bespoke a hare, which the poacher undertook to furnish. He laid his snares accordingly overnight, but they were discovered, and taken away by the gamekeeper of the gentleman to whom the ground belonged. All

the excuses the poacher could make proved ineffectual in appeasing the resentment of the justice and his wife at being thus disconcerted. Measures were taken to detect the delinquent in the exercise of his illicit occupation; he was committed to safe custody, and his wife, with five bantlings, was passed to her husband's settlement in a different part of the country.

A stout squat fellow, rattling with chains, had just taken up the ball of accusation, when Sir Launcelot was startled with the appearance of a woman, whose looks and equipage indicated the most piteous distress. She seemed to be turned of the middle age, was of a lofty carriage, tall, thin, weather-beaten, and wretchedly attired; her eyes were inflamed with weeping, and her looks displayed that wildness and peculiarity which denote distraction. Advancing to Sir Launcelot, she fell upon her knees, and, clasping her hands together, uttered the following rhapsody in the most vehement tone of affliction: —

"Thrice potent, generous, and august emperor; here let my knees cleave to the earth, until thou shalt do me justice on that inhuman caitiff Gobble. Let him disgorge my substance which he hath devoured; let him restore to my widowed arms my child, my boy, the delight of my eyes, the prop of my life, the staff of my sustenance, whom he hath torn from my embrace, stolen, betrayed, sent into captivity, and murdered! Behold these bleeding wounds upon his lovely breast! see how they mangle his lifeless corse! Horror! give me my child, barbarians! his head shall lie upon his Suky's bosom —

she will embalm him with her tears. Ha! plunge him in the deep! — shall my boy then float in a watery tomb? Justice, most mighty emperor! justice upon the villain who hath ruined us all! May Heaven's dreadful vengeance overtake him! may the keen storm of adversity strip him of all his leaves and fruit! may peace forsake his mind, and rest be banished from his pillow, so that all his days shall be filled with reproach and sorrow, and all his nights be haunted with horror and remorse! may he be stung by jealousy without cause, and maddened by revenge without the means of execution! may all his offspring be blighted and consumed, like the mildewed ears of corn, except one that shall grow up to curse his old age, and bring his hoary head with sorrow to the grave, as he himself has proved a curse to me and mine!"

The rest of the prisoners, perceiving the knight extremely shocked at her misery and horrid imprecation, removed her by force from his presence, and conveyed her to another room; while our adventurer underwent a violent agitation, and could not for some minutes compose himself so well as to inquire into the nature of this wretched creature's calamity.

The shopkeeper, of whom he demanded this satisfaction, gave him to understand that she was born a gentlewoman, and had been well educated; that she married a curate, who did not long survive his nuptials, and afterwards became the wife of one Oakley, a farmer in opulent circumstances. That after twenty years' cohabitation with her husband,

he sustained such losses by the distemper among the cattle, as he could not repair; and that this reverse of fortune was supposed to have hastened his death. That the widow, being a woman of spirit, determined to keep up and manage the farm, with the assistance of an only son, a very promising youth, who was already contracted in marriage with the daughter of another wealthy farmer. Thus the mother had a prospect of retrieving the affairs of her family, when all her hopes were dashed and destroyed by a ridiculous pique which Mrs. Gobble conceived against the young farmer's sweetheart, Mrs. Susan Sedgemoor.

This young woman chancing to be at a country assembly, where the gravedigger of the parish acted as master of the ceremonies, was called out to dance before Miss Gobble, who happened to be there present also with her mother. The circumstance was construed into an unpardonable affront by the justice's lady, who abused the director in the most opprobrious terms for his insolence and ill manners; and retiring in a storm of passion, vowed revenge against the saucy minx who had presumed to vie in gentility with Miss Gobble. The justice entered into her resentment. The gravedigger lost his place; and Suky's lover, young Oakley, was pressed for a soldier. Before his mother could take any steps for his discharge, he was hurried away to the East Indies, by the industry and contrivance of the justice. Poor Suky wept and pined until she fell into a consumption. The forlorn widow, being thus deprived of her son, was overwhelmed with grief to such a degree, that she

could no longer manage her concerns. Everything went backwards; she ran in arrears with her landlord; and the prospect of bankruptcy aggravated her affliction, while it added to her incapacity. In the midst of these disastrous circumstances, news arrived that her son Greaves had lost his life in a sea engagement with the enemy; and these tidings almost instantly deprived her of reason. Then the landlord seized for his rent, and she was arrested at the suit of Justice Gobble, who had bought up one of her debts in order to distress her, and now pretended that her madness was feigned.

When the name of Greaves was mentioned, our adventurer started and changed colour; and, now the story was ended, asked, with marks of eager emotion, if the name of the woman's first husband was not Wilford. When the prisoner answered in the affirmative, he rose up, and striking his breast, "Good heaven!" cried he, "the very woman who watched over my infancy, and even nourished me with her milk! She was my mother's humble friend. Alas! poor Dorothy! how would your old mistress grieve to see her favourite in this miserable condition." While he pronounced these words, to the astonishment of the hearers, a tear stole softly down each cheek. Then he desired to know if the poor lunatic had any intervals of reason; and was given to understand that she was always quiet, and generally supposed to have the use of her senses, except when she was disturbed by some extraordinary noise, or when any person touched upon her misfortune, or mentioned the name of her oppressor, in all which cases

she started out into extravagance and frenzy. They likewise imputed great part of the disorder to the want of quiet, proper food, and necessaries, with which she was but poorly supplied by the cold hand of chance charity. Our adventurer was exceedingly affected by the distress of this woman, whom he resolved to relieve; and in proportion as his commiseration was excited, his resentment rose against the miscreant, who seemed to have insinuated himself into the commission of the peace on purpose to harass and oppress his fellow-creatures.

Thus animated, he entered into consultation with Mr. Thomas Clarke concerning the steps he should take, first for their deliverance, and then for prosecuting and punishing the justice. In result of this conference, the knight called aloud for the jailor, and demanded to see a copy of his commitment, that he might know the cause of his imprisonment, and offer bail; or, in case that he should be refused, move for a writ of Habeas Corpus. The jailor told him the copy of the writ should be forthcoming. But after he had waited some time, and repeated the demand before witnesses, it was not yet produced. Mr. Clarke then, in a solemn tone, gave the jailor to understand, that an officer refusing to deliver a true copy of the commitment warrant was liable to the forfeiture of one hundred pounds for the first offence, and for the second to a forfeiture of twice that sum, besides being disabled from executing his office.

Indeed, it was no easy matter to comply with Sir Launcelot's demand; for no warrant had been granted,

nor was it now in the power of the justice to remedy this defect, as Mr. Ferret had taken himself away privately, without having communicated the name and designation of the prisoner. A circumstance the more mortifying to the jailor, as he perceived the extraordinary respect which Mr. Clarke and the captain paid to the knight, and was now fully convinced that he would be dealt with according to law. Disordered with these reflections, he imparted them to the justice, who had in vain caused search to be made for Ferret, and was now extremely well inclined to set the knight and his friends at liberty, though he did not at all suspect the quality and importance of our adventurer. He could not, however, resist the temptation of displaying the authority of his office, and therefore ordered the prisoners to be brought before his tribunal, that, in the capacity of a magistrate, he might give them a severe reproof, and proper caution with respect to their future behaviour.

They were accordingly led through the street in procession, guarded by the constable and his gang, followed by Crabshaw, who had by this time been released from the stocks, and surrounded by a crowd of people, attracted by curiosity. When they arrived at the justice's house, they were detained for some time in the passage; then a voice was heard, commanding the constable to bring in the prisoners, and they were introduced to the hall of audience, where Mr. Gobble sat in judgment, with a crimson velvet night-cap on his head; and on his right hand appeared his lady, puffed up with the pride and insolence of her

husband's office, fat, frouzy, and not over-clean, well stricken in years, without the least vestige of an agreeable feature, having a rubicund nose, ferret eyes, and imperious aspect. The justice himself was a little, affected, pert prig, who endeavoured to solemnise his countenance by assuming an air of consequence, in which pride, impudence, and folly were strangely blended. He aspired at nothing so much as the character of an able spokesman; and took all opportunities of holding forth at vestry and quarter sessions, as well as in the administration of his office in private. He would not, therefore, let slip this occasion of exciting the admiration of his hearers, and, in an authoritative tone, thus addressed our adventurer: —

"The laws of this land has provided — I says as how provision is made by the laws of this here land, in reverence to delinquems and malefactors, whereby the king's peace is upholden by we magistrates, who represents his majesty's person, better than in e'er a contagious nation under the sun; but, howsomever, that there king's peace, and this here magistrate's authority cannot be adequably and identically upheld, if so be as how criminals escapes unpunished. Now, friend, you must be confidentious in your own mind, as you are a notorious criminal, who have trespassed again the laws on divers occasions and importunities; if I had a mind to exercise the rigour of the law, according to the authority wherewith I am wested, you and your companions in iniquity would be sewerely punished by the statue; but we magistrates has a power to litigate the sewerity of justice, and so I am con-

tented that you should be mercifully dealt withal, and even dismissed."

To this harangue the knight replied, with a solemn and deliberate accent, "If I understand your meaning aright, I am accused of being a notorious criminal; but nevertheless you are contented to let me escape with impunity. If I am a notorious criminal, it is the duty of you, as a magistrate, to bring me to condign punishment; and if you allow a criminal to escape unpunished, you are not only unworthy of a place in the commission, but become accessory to his guilt, and, to all intents and purposes, *socius criminis*. With respect to your proffered mercy, I shall decline the favour; nor do I deserve any indulgence at your hands, for, depend upon it, I shall show no mercy to you in the steps I intend to take for bringing you to justice. I understand that you have been long hackneyed in the ways of oppression, and I have seen some living monuments of your inhumanity — of that hereafter. I myself have been detained in prison, without cause assigned. I have been treated with indignity, and insulted by jailors and constables; led through the streets like a felon, as a spectacle to the multitude; obliged to dance attendance in your passage, and afterwards branded with the name of notorious criminal. — I now demand to see the information in consequence of which I was detained in prison, the copy of the warrant of commitment or detainer, and the face of the person by whom I was accused. I insist upon a compliance with these demands, as the privileges of a British subject; and if it is refused, I shall seek redress before a higher tribunal."

The justice seemed to be not a little disturbed at this peremptory declaration; which, however, had no other effect upon his wife, but that of enraging her choler, and inflaming her countenance. "Sirrah! sirrah!" cried she, "do you dares to insult a worshipful magistrate on the bench? — Can you deny that you are a vagram, and a dilatory sort of a person? Han't the man with the satchel made an affidavy of it? — If I was my husband, I'd lay you fast by the heels for your resumption, and ferk you with a priminery into the bargain, unless you could give a better account of yourself — I would."

Gobble, encouraged by this fillip, resumed his petulance, and proceeded in this manner: — "Hark ye, friend, I might, as Mrs. Gobble very justly observes, trounce you for your audacious behaviour; but I scorn to take such advantages. Howsomever, I shall make you give an account of yourself and your companions; for I believes as how you are in a gang, and all in a story, and perhaps you may be found one day in a cord. — What are you, friend? What is your station and degree?" — "I am a gentleman," replied the knight. — "Ay, that is English for a sorry fellow," said the justice. "Every idle vagabond, who has neither home nor habitation, trade nor profession, designs himself a gentleman. But I must know how you live?" — "Upon my means." — "What are your means?" — "My estate." — "Whence does it arise?" — "From inheritance." — "Your estate lies in brass, and that you have inherited from nature; but do you inherit lands and tenements?" — "Yes." — "But they are neither here

nor there, I doubt. Come, come, friend, I shall bring you about presently." Here the examination was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Fillet the surgeon, who chancing to pass, and seeing a crowd about the door, went in to satisfy his curiosity.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WHICH SHOWS THERE ARE MORE WAYS TO KILL A DOG THAN HANGING.

MR. FILLET no sooner appeared in the judgment-chamber of Justice Gobble, than Captain Crowe, seizing him by the hand, exclaimed, "Body o' me! Doctor, thou 'rt come up in the nick of time to lend us a hand in putting about. — We 're a little in the stays here — but howsomever we 've got a good pilot, who knows the coast; and can weather the point, as the saying is. As for the enemy's vessel, she has had a shot or two already athwart her forefoot; the next, I do suppose, will strike the hull, and then you will see her taken all a-back." The doctor, who perfectly understood his dialect, assured him he might depend upon his assistance; and, advancing to the knight, accosted him in these words: "Sir Launcelot Greaves, your most humble servant — when I saw a crowd at the door, I little thought of finding you within, treated with such indignity — yet I can't help being pleased with an opportunity of proving the esteem and veneration I have for your person and character. —You will do me particular pleasure in commanding my best services."

Our adventurer thanked him for this instance of his friendship, which he told him he would use without hesitation; and desired he would procure immediate bail for him and his two friends, who had been imprisoned contrary to law, without any cause assigned.

During this short dialogue, the justice, who had heard of Sir Launcelot's family and fortune, though an utter stranger to his person, was seized with such pangs of terror and compunction, as a grovelling mind may be supposed to have felt in such circumstances; and they seemed to produce the same unsavoury effects that are so humorously delineated by the inimitable Hogarth, in his print of Felix on his tribunal, done in the Dutch style. Nevertheless, seeing Fillet retire to execute the knight's commands, he recollected himself so far as to tell the prisoners, there was no occasion to give themselves any farther trouble, for he would release them without bail or mainprise. Then discarding all the insolence from his features, and assuming an aspect of the most humble adulation, he begged the knight ten thousand pardons for the freedoms he had taken, which were entirely owing to his ignorance of Sir Launcelot's quality.

"Yes, I'll assure you, sir," said the wife, "my husband would have bit off his tongue rather than say black is the white of your eye, if so be he had known your capacity. — Thank God, we have been used to deal with gentlefolks, and many 's the good pound we have lost by them; but what of that? Sure we know how to behave to our betters. Mr. Gobble, thanks

be to God, can defy the whole world to prove that he ever said an uncivil word, or did a rude thing to a gentleman, knowing him to be a person of fortune. Indeed, as to your poor gentry and riffraff, your tag-rag and bob-tail, or such vulgar scoundrelly people, he has always behaved like a magistrate, and treated them with the rigger of authority." — "In other words," said the knight, "he has tyrannised over the poor, and connived at the vices of the rich. Your husband is little obliged to you for this confession, woman." — "Woman!" cried Mrs. Gobble, impurpled with wrath, and fixing her hands on her sides by way of defiance, "I scorn your words. — Marry come up! woman, quotha! no more a woman than your worship." Then bursting into tears, "Husband," continued she, "if you had the soul of a louse, you would not suffer me to be abused at this rate; you would not sit still on the bench, and hear your spouse called such contemptible epitaphs. — Who cares for his title and his knightship? You and I, husband, knew a tailor that was made a knight; but thank God, I have noblemen to stand by me with their privileges and beroguetifs."

At this instant Mr. Fillet returned with his friend, a practitioner in the law, who freely offered to join in bailing our adventurer, and the other two prisoners, for any sum that should be required. The justice perceiving the affair began to grow more and more serious, declared that he would discharge the warrants and dismiss the prisoners.

Here Mr. Clarke interposing, observed, that against the knight no warrant had been granted, nor

any information sworn to; consequently, as the justice had not complied with the form of proceeding directed by statute, the imprisonment was *coram non judice*, void. "Right, sir," said the other lawyer; "if a justice commits a felon for trial without binding over the prosecutor to the assizes, he shall be fined." — "And again," cried Clarke, "if a justice issues a warrant for commitment, where there is no accusation, action will lie against the justice." — "Moreover," replied the stranger, "if a justice of peace is guilty of any misdemeanour in his office, information lies against him in *Banco Regis*, where he shall be punished by fine and imprisonment." — "And, besides," resumed the accurate Tom, "the same court will grant an information against a justice of peace, on motion, for sending even a servant to the house of correction or common jail without sufficient cause." — "True!" exclaimed the other limb of the law, "and, for contempt of the law, attachment may be had against justices of peace in *Banco Regis*. A justice of the peace was fined a thousand marks for corrupt practices."

With these words, advancing to Mr. Clarke, he shook him by the hand, with the appellation of brother, saying, "I doubt the justice has got into a cursed *hovel*." Mr. Gobble himself seemed to be of the same opinion. He changed colour several times during the remarks which the lawyers had made; and now, declaring that the gentlemen were at liberty, begged, in the most humble phrase, that the company would eat a bit of mutton with him, and after dinner the affair might be amicably compromised.

To this proposal our adventurer replied, in a grave and resolute tone, "If your acting in the commission as a justice of the peace concerned my own particular only, perhaps I should waive any further inquiry, and resent your insolence no other way but by silent contempt. If I thought the errors of your administration proceeded from a good intention, defeated by want of understanding, I should pity your ignorance, and, in compassion, advise you to desist from acting a part for which you are so ill qualified; but the preposterous conduct of such a man deeply affects the interest of the community, especially that part of it, which, from its helpless situation, is the more entitled to your protection and assistance. I am, moreover, convinced that your misconduct is not so much the consequence of an uninformed head, as the poisonous issue of a malignant heart, devoid of humanity, inflamed with pride, and rankling with revenge. The common prison of this little town is filled with the miserable objects of your cruelty and oppression. Instead of protecting the helpless, restraining the hands of violence, preserving the public tranquillity, and acting as a father to the poor, according to the intent and meaning of that institution of which you are an unworthy member, you have distressed the widow and the orphan, given a loose to all the insolence of office, embroiled your neighbours by fomenting suits and animosities, and played the tyrant among the indigent and forlorn. You have abused the authority with which you were invested, entailed a reproach upon your office, and, instead of being revered as a blessing, you are detested

as a curse among your fellow-creatures. This indeed is generally the case of low fellows, who are thrust into the magistracy without sentiment, education, or capacity.

"Among other instances of your iniquity, there is now in prison an unhappy woman, infinitely your superior in the advantages of birth, sense, and education, whom you have, even without provocation, persecuted to ruin and distraction, after having illegally and inhumanly kidnapped her only child, and exposed him to a violent death in a foreign land. Ah, caitiff! if you were to forego all the comforts of life, distribute your means among the poor, and do the severest penance that ever priestcraft prescribed for the rest of your days, you could not atone for the ruin of that hapless family; a family through whose sides you cruelly and perfidiously stabbed the heart of an innocent young woman, to gratify the pride and diabolical malice of that wretched low-bred woman, who now sits at your right hand as the associate of power and presumption. Oh! if such a despicable reptile shall annoy mankind with impunity, if such a contemptible miscreant shall have it in his power to do such deeds of inhumanity and oppression, what avails the law? Where is our admired constitution, the freedom, the security of the subject, the boasted humanity of the British nation! Sacred Heaven! if there was no human institution to take cognisance of such atrocious crimes, I would listen to the dictates of eternal justice, and, arming myself with the right of nature, exterminate such villains from the face of the earth!"

These last words he pronounced in such a strain, while his eyes lightened with indignation, that Gobble and his wife underwent the most violent agitation; the constable's teeth chattered in his head, the jailor trembled, and the whole audience was overwhelmed with consternation.

After a short pause, Sir Launcelot proceeded in a milder strain: "Thank Heaven, the laws of this country have exempted me from the disagreeable task of such an execution. To them we shall have immediate recourse, in three separate actions against you for false imprisonment; and any other person who has been injured by your arbitrary and wicked proceedings, in me shall find a warm protector, until you shall be expunged from the commission with disgrace, and have made such retaliation as your circumstances will allow for the wrongs you have done the community."

In order to complete the mortification and terror of the justice, the lawyer, whose name was Fenton, declared that, to his certain knowledge, these actions would be reinforced with divers prosecutions for corrupt practices, which had lain dormant until some person of courage and influence should take the lead against Justice Gobble, who was the more dreaded, as he acted under the patronage of Lord Sharpington. By this time fear had deprived the justice and his helpmate of the faculty of speech. They were indeed almost petrified with dismay, and made no effort to speak, when Mr. Fillet, in the rear of the knight, as he retired with his company, took his leave of them in these words:

"And now, Mr. Justice, to dinner with what appetite you may."

Our adventurer, though warmly invited to Mr. Fenton's house, repaired to a public inn, where he thought he should be more at his ease, fully determined to punish and depose Gobble from his magistracy, to effect a general jail-delivery of all the debtors whom he had found in confinement, and in particular to rescue poor Mrs. Oakley from the miserable circumstances in which she was involved.

In the meantime he insisted upon entertaining his friends at dinner, during which many sallies of sea-wit and good humour passed between Captain Crowe and Dr. Fillet, which last had just returned from a neighbouring village, whither he was summoned to fish a man's yard-arm, which had snapt in the slings. Their enjoyment, however, was suddenly interrupted by a loud scream from the kitchen, whither Sir Launcelot immediately sprung, with equal eagerness and agility. There he saw the landlady, who was a woman in years, embracing a man dressed in a sailor's jacket, while she exclaimed, "It is thy own flesh and blood, so sure as I'm a living soul. — Ah! poor Greaves, poor Greaves, many a poor heart has grieved for thee!" To this salutation the youth replied, "I'm sorry for that, mistress. — How does poor mother? how does Suky Sedgemoor?"

The good woman of the house could not help shedding tears at these interrogations; while Sir Launcelot, interposing, said, not without emotion, "I perceive you are the son of Mrs. Oakley. — Your

mother is in a bad state of health, but in me you will find a real parent." Perceiving that the young man eyed him with astonishment, he gave him to understand that his name was Launcelot Greaves.

Oakley no sooner heard these words pronounced, than he fell upon his knees, and seizing the knight's hand, kissed it eagerly, crying, "God for ever bless your honour, I am your name-son, sure enough — but what of that? I can earn my bread without being beholden to any man."

When the knight raised him up, he turned to the woman of the house, saying, "I want to see mother. I'm afraid as how times are hard with her; and I have saved some money for her use." This instance of filial duty brought tears into the eyes of our adventurer, who assured him his mother should be carefully attended, and want for nothing; but that it would be very improper to see her at present, as the surprise might shock her too much, considering that she believed him dead. "Ey, indeed," cried the landlady, "we were all of the same opinion, being as the report went, that poor Greaves Oakley was killed in battle." "Lord, mistress," said Oakley, "there wan't a word of truth in it, I'll assure you. — What, d'ye think I'd tell a lie about the matter? Hurt I was, to be sure, but that don't signify; we gave 'em as good as they brought, and so parted. — Well, if so be I can't see mother, I'll go and have some chat with Suky.— What d'ye look so glum for? she an't married, is she?" "No, no," replied the woman, "not married, but almost heart-broken. Since thou wast gone she has done nothing but

sighed, and wept, and pined herself into a decay. I'm afraid thou hast come too late to save her life."

Oakley's heart was not proof against this information. Bursting into tears, he exclaimed, "O my dear, sweet, gentle Suky! Have I then lived to be the death of her whom I loved more than the whole world?" He would have gone instantly to her father's house, but was restrained by the knight and his company, who had now joined him in the kitchen.

The young man was seated at table, and gave them to understand, that the ship to which he belonged having arrived in England, he was indulged with a month's leave to see his relations; and that he had received about fifty pounds in wages and prize-money. After dinner, just as they began to deliberate upon the measures to be taken against Gobble, that gentleman arrived at the inn, and humbly craved admittance. Mr. Fillet, struck with a sudden idea, retired into another apartment with the young farmer; while the justice, being admitted to the company, declared that he came to propose terms of accommodation. He accordingly offered to ask pardon of Sir Launcelot in the public papers, and pay fifty pounds to the poor of the parish, as an atonement for his misbehaviour, provided the knight and his friends would grant him a general release. Our adventurer told him, he would willingly waive all personal concessions; but, as the case concerned the community, he insisted upon his leaving off acting in the commission, and making satis-

faction to the parties he had injured and oppressed. This declaration introduced a discussion, in the course of which the justice's petulance began to revive; when Fillet, entering the room, told them he had a reconciling measure to propose, if Mr. Gobble would for a few minutes withdraw.

He rose up immediately, and was shown into the room which Fillet had prepared for his reception. While he sat musing on this untoward adventure, so big with disgrace and disappointment, young Oakley, according to the instructions he had received, appeared all at once before him, pointing to a ghastly wound, which the doctor had painted on his forehead. The apparition no sooner presented itself to the eyes of Gobble, than, taking it for granted it was the spirit of the young farmer whose death he had occasioned, he roared aloud, "Lord have mercy upon us!" and fell insensible on the floor. There being found by the company, to whom Fillet had communicated his contrivance, he was conveyed to bed, where he lay some time before he recovered the perfect use of his senses. Then he earnestly desired to see the knight, and assured him he was ready to comply with his terms, inasmuch as he believed he had not long to live. Advantage was immediately taken of this salutary disposition. He bound himself not to act as a justice of the peace, in any part of Great Britain, under the penalty of five thousand pounds. He burnt Mrs. Oakley's note; paid the debts of the shopkeeper; undertook to compound those of the publican, and to settle him again in business; and, finally, discharged them all from

prison, paying the dues out of his own pocket. These steps being taken with peculiar eagerness, he was removed to his own house, where he assured his wife he had seen a vision that prognosticated his death; and had immediate recourse to the curate of the parish for spiritual consolation.

The most interesting part of the task that now remained was to make the widow Oakley acquainted with her good fortune, in such a manner as might least disturb her spirits, already but too much discomposed. For this purpose they chose the landlady, who, after having received proper directions how to regulate her conduct, visited her in person that same evening. Finding her quite calm, and her reflection quite restored, she began with exhorting her to put her trust in Providence, which would never forsake the cause of the injured widow and fatherless. She promised to assist and befriend her on all occasions, as far as her abilities would reach. She gradually turned the conversation upon the family of the Greaves; and by degrees informed her, that Sir Launcelot, having learned her situation, was determined to extricate her from all her troubles. Perceiving her astonished, and deeply affected at this intimation, she artfully shifted the discourse, recommended resignation to the divine will, and observed, that this circumstance seemed to be an earnest of further happiness.

"Oh! I'm incapable of receiving more!" cried the disconsolate widow, with streaming eyes. — "Yet I ought not to be surprised at any blessing that flows from that quarter. The family of Greaves

were always virtuous, humane, and benevolent. This young gentleman's mother was my dear lady and benefactress: — he himself was suckled at these breasts. Oh! he was the sweetest, comeliest, best-conditioned babe! — I loved not my own Greaves with greater affection — but he, alas! is now no more!" "Have patience, good neighbour," said the landlady of the White Hart, "that is more than you have any right to affirm — all that you know of the matter is by common report, and common report is commonly false; besides, I can tell you I have seen a list of the men that were killed in Admiral P——'s ship, when he fought the French in the East Indies, and your son was not in the number." To this intimation she replied, after a considerable pause, "Don't, my good neighbour, don't feed me with false hope. — My poor Greaves too certainly perished in a foreign land — yet he is happy; — had he lived to see me in this condition, grief would soon have put a period to his days." "I tell you then," cried the visitant, "he is not dead. I have seen a letter that mentions his being well since the battle. You shall come along with me — you are no longer a prisoner, but shall live at my house comfortably, till your affairs are settled to your wish." The poor widow followed her in silent astonishment, and was immediately accommodated with necessaries.

Next morning her hostess proceeded with her in the same cautious manner, until she was assured that her son had returned. Being duly prepared, she was blest with a sight of poor Greaves, and fainted away in his arms. We shall not dwell upon this tender

scene, because it is but of a secondary concern in the history of our knight-errant. Let it suffice to say, their mutual happiness was unspeakable. She was afterwards visited by Sir Launcelot, whom she no sooner beheld, than springing forwards with all the eagerness of maternal affection, she clasped him to her breast, crying, "My dear child! my Launcelot! my pride! my darling! my kind benefactor! This is not the first time I have hugged you in these arms! Oh! you are the very image of Sir Everhard in his youth; but you have got the eyes, the complexion, the sweetness, and complacency of my dear and ever-honoured lady." This was not in the strain of hireling praise; but the genuine tribute of esteem and admiration. As such, it could not but be agreeable to our hero, who undertook to procure Oakley's discharge, and settle him in a comfortable farm on his own estate.

In the meantime Greaves went with a heavy heart to the house of Farmer Sedgemoor, where he found Suky, who had been prepared for his reception, in a transport of joy, though very weak, and greatly emaciated. Nevertheless, the return of her sweetheart had such an happy effect on her constitution, that in a few weeks her health was perfectly restored.

This adventure of our knight was crowned with every happy circumstance that could give pleasure to a generous mind. The prisoners were released, and reinstated in their former occupations. The justice performed his articles from fear; and afterwards turned over a new leaf from remorse. Young

Oakley was married to Suky, with whom he received a considerable portion. The new-married couple found a farm ready stocked for them on the knight's estate; and the mother enjoyed a happy retreat in the character of housekeeper at Greavesbury Hall.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

IN WHICH OUR KNIGHT IS TANTALISED WITH A TRANSIENT GLIMPSE OF FELICITY.

THE success of our adventurer, which we have particularised in the last chapter, could not fail of enhancing his character, not only among those who knew him, but also among the people of the town to whom he was not an utter stranger. The populace surrounded the house, and testified their approbation in loud huzzas. Captain Crowe was more than ever inspired with veneration for his admired patron, and more than ever determined to pursue his footsteps in the road of chivalry. Fillet and his friend the lawyer could not help conceiving an affection, and even a profound esteem for the exalted virtue, the person, and accomplishments of the knight, dashed as they were with a mixture of extravagance and insanity. Even Sir Launcelot himself was elevated to an extraordinary degree of self-complacency on the fortunate issue of his adventure, and became more and more persuaded that a knight-errant's profession might be exercised, even in England, to the advantage of the community. The only person of the company who seemed unanimated with the general satisfaction was Mr. Thomas Clarke. He had, not

without good reason, laid it down as a maxim, tha knight-errantry and madness were synonymous terms and that madness, though exhibited in the mos advantageous and agreeable light, could not chang its nature, but must continue a perversion of sens to the end of the chapter. He perceived the addi tional impression which the brain of his uncle ha sustained, from the happy manner in which th benevolence of Sir Launcelot had so lately operated and began to fear it would be in a little time quit necessary to have recourse to a commission of lunacy which might not only disgrace the family of th Crowes, but also tend to invalidate the settlemen which the captain had already made in favour of ou young lawyer.

Perplexed with these cogitations, Mr. Clarke ap pealed to our adventurer's own reflection. He expa tiated upon the bad consequences that would atten his uncle's perseverance in the execution of a schem so foreign to his faculties; and entreated him, fo the love of God, to divert him from his purpose either by arguments or authority; as, of all man kind, the knight alone had gained such an ascend ency over his spirits, that he would listen to hi exhortations with respect and submission.

Our adventurer was not so mad, but that he sa and owned the rationality of these remarks. H readily undertook to employ all his influence witl Crowe, to dissuade him from his extravagant design and seized the first opportunity of being alone witl the captain, to signify his sentiments on this subject " Captain Crowe," said he, " you are then determine

to proceed in the course of knight-errantry?" "I am," replied the seaman, "with God's help, d' ye see, and the assistance of wind and weather" — "What dost thou talk of wind and weather?" cried the knight, in an elevated tone of affected transport; "without the help of Heaven, indeed, we are all vanity, imbecility, weakness, and wretchedness; but if thou art resolved to embrace the life of an errant, let me not hear thee so much as whisper a doubt, a wish, a hope, or sentiment with respect to any other obstacle, which wind or weather, fire or water, sword or famine, danger or disappointment, may throw in the way of thy career. When the duty of thy profession calls, thou must singly rush upon innumerable hosts of armed men. Thou must storm the breach in the mouth of batteries loaded with death and destruction, while, every step thou movest, thou art exposed to the horrible explosion of subterranean mines, which, being sprung, will whirl thee aloft in air, a mangled corse, to feed the fowls of heaven. Thou must leap into the abyss of dreadful caves and caverns, replete with poisonous toads and hissing serpents; thou must plunge into seas of burning sulphur; thou must launch upon the ocean in a crazy bark, when the foaming billows roll mountains high — when the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, and the howling tempest blows, as if it would commix the jarring elements of air and water, earth and fire, and reduce all nature to the original anarchy of chaos. Thus involved, thou must turn thy prow full against the fury of the storm, and stem the boisterous surge to thy destined port,

though at the distance of a thousand leagues; th
must "—

"Avast, avast, brother," exclaimed the impatie
Crowe, "you've got into the high latitudes, d'
see. If so be as you spank it away at that ra
adad, I can't continue in tow — we must cast off t
rope, or 'ware timbers. As for your 'osts a
breeches, and hurling aloft, d'ye see — your caves a
caverns, whistling tuods and serpents, burning brii
stone and foaming billows, we must take our hap
I value 'em not a rotten ratline; but as for saili
in the wind's eye, brother, you must give me leave
no offence, I hope — I pretend to be a thoroug
bred seaman, 'd'ye see — and I'll be d—ned if yo
or e'er an arrant that broke biscuit, ever sailed in
three-mast vessel with[in] five points of the win
allowing for variation and lee-way. No, no, broth
none of your tricks upon travellers — I an't now
learn my compass." "Tricks!" cried the knigh
starting up, and laying his hand on the pummel
his sword, "what! suspect my honour?"

Crowe, supposing him to be really incensed, inte
rupted him with great earnestness, saying, "Na
don't — what apize! — adds-buntlines! — I did
go to give you the lie, brother, smite my limbs;
only said as how to sail in the wind's eye was in
possible." "And I say unto thee," resumed th
knight, "nothing is impossible to a true knigh
errant, inspired and animated by love." "And
say unto thee," hallooed Crowe, "if so be as how lo
pretends to turn his hawse-holes to the wind, he
no seaman, d'ye see, but a snotty-nosed lubber

boy, that knows not a cat from a capstan — a don't."

"He that does not believe that love is an infallible pilot, must not embark upon the voyage of chivalry; for, next to the protection of Heaven, it is from love that the knight derives all his prowess and glory. The bare name of his mistress invigorates his arm; the remembrance of her beauty infuses into his breast the most heroic sentiments of courage, while the idea of her chastity hedges him round like a charm, and renders him invulnerable to the sword of his antagonist. A knight without a mistress is a mere nonentity, or, at least, a monster in nature — a pilot without a compass, a ship without rudder, and must be driven to and fro upon the waves of discomfiture and disgrace."

"An that be all," replied the sailor, "I told you before as how I 've got a sweetheart, as true a hearted girl as ever swung in canvas. What thof she may have started a hoop in rolling, that signifies nothing; I 'll warrant her tight as a nut-shell."

"She must, in your opinion, be a paragon either of beauty or virtue. Now, as you have given up the last, you must uphold her charms unequalled, and her person without a parallel." "I do, I do uphold she will sail upon a parallel as well as e'er a frigate that was rigged to the northward of fifty."

"At that rate, she must rival the attractions of her whom I adore; but that I say is impossible. The perfections of my Aurelia are altogether supernatural; and as two suns cannot shine together in the same sphere with equal splendour, so I affirm,

and will prove with my body, that your mistress, in comparison with mine, is as a glow-worm to the meridian sun, a rushlight to the full moon, or a stale mackerel's eye to a pearl of orient." "Harkee, brother, you might give good words, however. An we once fall a-jawing, d' ye see, I can heave out as much bilgewater as another; and since you besmear my sweetheart, Besselia, I can as well bedaub your mistress Aurelia, whom I value no more than old junk, pork slush, or stinking stock-fish."

"Enough, enough! — such blasphemy shall not pass unchastised. In consideration of our having fed from the same table, and maintained together a friendly, though short intercourse, I will not demand the combat before you are duly prepared. Proceed to the first great town, where you can be furnished with horse and harnessing, with arms offensive and defensive; provide a trusty squire, assume a motto and device, declare yourself a son of chivalry, and proclaim the excellence of her who rules your heart. I shall fetch a compass; and wheresoever we may chance to meet, let us engage with equal arms in mortal combat, that shall decide and determine this dispute."

So saying, our adventurer stalked with great solemnity into another apartment; while Crowe, being sufficiently irritated, snapped his fingers in token of defiance. Honest Crowe thought himself scurvily used by a man whom he had cultivated with such humility and veneration; and, after an incoherent ejaculation of sea oaths, went in quest of his nephew, in order to make him acquainted with this unlucky transaction.

THE SQUIRE BASTED

In the meantime, Sir Launcelot, having ordered supper, retired into his own chamber, and gave a loose to the most tender emotions of his heart. He recollected all the fond ideas which had been excited in the course of his correspondence with the charming Aurelia. He remembered, with horror, the cruel letter he had received from that young lady, containing a formal renunciation of his attachment, so unsuitable to the whole tenor of her character and conduct. He revolved the late adventure of the coach, and the declaration of Mr. Clarke, with equal eagerness and astonishment; and was seized with the most ardent desire of unravelling a mystery so interesting to the prdeominant passion of his heart. All these mingled considerations produced a kind of ferment in the economy of his mind, which subsided into a profound reverie, compounded of hope and perplexity.

From this trance he was waked by the arrival of his squire, who entered the room with the blood trickling over his nose, and stood before him without speaking. When the knight asked whose livery was that he wore? he replied, "'Tis your honour's own livery; I received it on your account, and hope as you will quit the score." Then he proceeded to inform his master, that two officers of the army having come into the kitchen, insisted upon having for their supper the victuals which Sir Launcelot had bespoke; and that he, the squire, objecting to the proposal, one of them had seized the poker, and basted him with his own blood; that when he told them he belonged to a knight-errant, and threatened

them with the vengeance of his master, they cursed and abused him, calling him Sancho Panza, and such dog's names; and bade him tell his master, Don Quicksot, that, if he made any noise, they would confine him to his cage, and lie with his mistress, Dulcinea. "To be sure, sir," said he, "they thought you as great a nincompoop as your squire — trim-tram, like master, like man; but I hope as how you will give them a Rowland for their Oliver."

"Miscreant!" cried the knight, "you have provoked the gentlemen with your impertinence, and they have chastised you as you deserve. I tell thee, Crabshaw, they have saved me the trouble of punishing thee with my own hands; and well it is for thee, sinner as thou art, that they themselves have performed the office, for, had they complained to me of thy insolence and rusticity, by Heaven! I would have made thee an example to all the impudent squires upon the face of the earth. Hence, then! avaunt, caitiff! let his majesty's officers, who perhaps are fatigued with hard duty in the service of their country, comfort themselves with the supper which was intended for me, and leave me undisturbed to my own meditations."

Timothy did not require a repetition of this command, which he forthwith obeyed, growling within himself, that thenceforward he should let every cuckold wear his own horns; but he could not help entertaining some doubts with respect to the courage of his master, who, he supposed, was one of those hectors who have their fighting days, but are not at all times equally prepared for the combat.

The knight having taken a slight repast, retired to his repose, and had for some time enjoyed a very agreeable slumber, when he was startled by a knocking at his chamber door. "I beg your honour's pardon," said the landlady, "but there are two uncivil persons in the kitchen who have well-nigh turned my whole house topsy-turvy. Not content with laying violent hands on your honour's supper, they want to be rude to two young ladies who are just arrived, and have called for a post-chaise to go on. They are afraid to open their chamber door to get out, and the young lawyer is like to be murdered for taking the ladies' part."

Sir Launcelot, though he refused to take notice of the insult which had been offered to himself, no sooner heard of the distress of the ladies than he started up, huddled on his clothes, and girding his sword to his loins, advanced with a deliberate pace to the kitchen, where he perceived Thomas Clarke warmly engaged in altercation with a couple of young men dressed in regimentals, who, with a peculiar air of arrogance and ferocity, treated him with great insolence and contempt. Tom was endeavouring to persuade them, that, in the constitution of England, the military was always subservient to the civil power, and that their behaviour to a couple of helpless young women was not only unbecoming gentlemen, but expressly contrary to the law, inasmuch as they might be sued for an assault on an action of damages.

To this remonstrance the two heroes in red replied by a volley of dreadful oaths, intermingled with

threats, which put the lawyer in some pain for his ears.

While one thus endeavoured to intimidate honest Tom Clarke, the other thundered at the door of the apartment to which the ladies had retired, demanding admittance, but received no other answer than a loud shriek. Our adventurer advancing to this uncivil champion, accosted him thus, in a grave and solemn tone: "Assuredly I could not have believed, except upon the evidence of my own senses, that persons who have the appearance of gentlemen, and bear his majesty's honourable commission in the army, could behave so wide of the decorum due to society, of a proper respect to the laws, of that humanity which we owe to our fellow-creatures, and that delicate regard for the fair sex which ought to prevail in the breast of every gentleman, and which in particular dignifies the character of a soldier. To whom shall that weaker, though more amiable part of the creation, fly for protection, if they are insulted and outraged by those whose more immediate duty it is to afford them security and defence from injury and violence? What right have you, or any man upon earth, to excite riot in a public inn, which may be deemed a temple sacred to hospitality; to disturb the quiet of your fellow-guests, some of them perhaps exhausted by fatigue, some of them invaded by distemper; to interrupt the king's lieges in their course of journeying upon their lawful occasions? Above all, what motive but wanton barbarity could prompt you to violate the apartment, and terrify the tender hearts of two helpless

young ladies, travelling, no doubt, upon some cruel emergency, which compels them, unattended, to encounter in the night the dangers of the highway?"

"Hearkye, Don Bethlem," said the captain, strutting up, and cocking his hat in the face of our adventurer, "you may be mad as ever a straw-crowned monarch in Moorfields, for aught I care, but damme! don't you be saucy, otherwise I shall dub your worship with a good stick across your shoulders."

"How! petulant boy," cried the knight, "since you are so ignorant of urbanity, I will give you a lesson that you shall not easily forget." So saying, he unsheathed his sword, and called upon the soldier to draw in his defence.

The reader may have seen the physiognomy of a stockholder at Jonathan's when the rebels were at Derby, or the features of a bard when accosted by a bailiff, or the countenance of an alderman when his banker stops payment; if he has seen either of these phenomena, he may conceive the appearance that was now exhibited by the visage of the ferocious captain, when the naked sword of Sir Launcelot glanced before his eyes; far from attempting to produce his own, which was of unconscionable length, he stood motionless as a statue, staring with the most ghastly look of terror and astonishment. His companion, who partook of his panic, seeing matters brought to a very serious crisis, interposed with a crest-fallen countenance, assuring Sir Launcelot they had no intention to quarrel, and what they had done was entirely for the sake of the frolic.

"By such frolics," cried the knight, "you become

nuisances to society, bring yourselves into contempt, and disgrace the corps to which you belong. I now perceive the truth of the observation, that cruelty always resides with cowardice. My contempt is changed into compassion, and as you are probably of good families, I must insist upon this young man's drawing his sword, and acquitting himself in such a manner as may screen him from the most infamous censure which an officer can undergo." "Lack-a-day, sir," said the other, "we are no officers, but prentices to two London haberdashers, travellers for orders; Captain is a good travelling name, and we have dressed ourselves like officers to procure more respect upon the road."

The knight said he was very glad, for the honour of the service, to find they were impostors, though they deserved to be chastised for arrogating to themselves an honourable character which they had not spirit to sustain.

These words were scarce pronounced, when Mr. Clarke approaching one of the bravadoes, who had threatened to crop his ears, bestowed such a benediction on his jaw, as he could not receive without immediate humiliation; while Timothy Crabshaw, smarting from his broken head and his want of supper, saluted the other with a Yorkshire hug, that laid him across the body of his companion. In a word, the two pseudo-officers were very roughly handled, for their presumption in pretending to act characters for which they were so ill qualified.

While Clarke and Crabshaw were thus laudably employed, the two young ladies passed through the

kitchen so suddenly, that the knight had only a transient glimpse of their backs, and they disappeared before he could possibly make a tender of his services. The truth is, they dreaded nothing so much as their being discovered, and took the first opportunity of gliding into the chaise, which had been for some time waiting in the passage.

Mr. Clarke was much more disconcerted than our adventurer by their sudden escape. He ran with great eagerness to the door, and, perceiving they were flown, returned to Sir Launcelot, saying, "Lord bless my soul, sir, did n't you see who it was?" "Ha! how!" exclaimed the knight, reddening with alarm, "who was it?" "One of them," replied the lawyer, "was Dolly, our old landlady's daughter at the Black Lion. I knew her when first she 'lighted, notwithstanding her being neatly dressed in a green joseph, which, I 'll assure you, sir, becomes her remarkably well. — I 'd never desire to see a prettier creature. As for the other, she 's a very genteel woman, but whether old or young, ugly or handsome, I can't pretend to say, for she was masked. I had just time to salute Dolly, and ask a few questions; but all she could tell me was, that the masked lady's name was Miss Meadows; and that she, Dolly, was hired as her waiting-woman."

When the name of Meadows was mentioned, Sir Launcelot, whose spirits had been in violent commotion, became suddenly calm and serene, and he began to communicate to Clarke the dialogue which had passed between him and Captain Crowe, when the hostess, addressing herself to our errant, "Well,"

said she, "I have had the honour to accommodate many ladies of the first fashion at the White Hart, both young and old, proud and lowly, ordinary and handsome; but such a miracle as Miss Meadows I never yet did see. — Lord, let me never thrive but I think she is of something more than a human creature! — Oh! had your honour but set eyes on her, you would have said it was a vision from heaven, a cherubim of beauty: — For my part, I can hardly think it was anything but a dream — then so meek, so mild, so good-natured and generous! I say, blessed is the young woman who tends upon such a heavenly creature: — And, poor dear young lady! she seems to be under grief and affliction, for the tears stole down her lovely cheeks, and looked for all the world like orient pearl."

Sir Launcelot listened attentively to the description, which reminded him of his dear Aurelia, and sighing bitterly, withdrew to his own apartment.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WHICH SHOWS THAT A MAN CANNOT ALWAYS SIP, WHEN THE CUP IS AT HIS LIP.

THOSE who have felt the doubts, the jealousies, the resentments, the humiliations, the hopes, the despair, the impatience, and, in a word, the infinite disquiets of love, will be able to conceive the sea of agitation on which our adventurer was tossed all night long, without repose or intermission. Sometimes he resolved to employ all his industry and address in discovering the place in which Aurelia was sequestered, that he might rescue her from the supposed restraint to which she had been subjected. But when his heart beat high with the anticipation of this exploit, he was suddenly invaded, and all his ardour checked, by the remembrance of that fatal letter, written and signed by her own hand, which had divorced him from all hope, and first unsettled his understanding. The emotions waked by this remembrance were so strong, that he leaped from the bed, and the fire being still burning in the chimney, lighted a candle, that he might once more banquet his spleen by reading the original billet, which, together with the ring he had received from Miss Darnel's mother, he kept in a

small box, carefully deposited within his portmanteau. This being instantly unlocked, he unfolded the paper, and recited the contents in these words: —

"Sir, — Obliged as I am by the passion you profess, and the eagerness with which you endeavour to give me the most convincing proof of your regard, I feel some reluctance in making you acquainted with a circumstance, which, in all probability, you will not learn without some disquiet. But the affair is become so interesting, I am compelled to tell you, that however agreeable your proposals may have been to those whom I thought it my duty to please by every reasonable concession, and howsoever you may have been flattered by the seeming complacency with which I have heard your addresses, I now find it absolutely necessary to speak in a decisive strain, to assure you, that, without sacrificing my own peace, I cannot admit a continuation of your correspondence; and that your regard for me will be best shown by your desisting from a pursuit which is altogether inconsistent with the happiness of

Aurelia Darnel."

Having pronounced aloud the words that composed this dismission, he hastily replaced the cruel scroll, and being too well acquainted with the hand to harbour the least doubt of its being genuine, threw himself into his bed in a transport of despair, mingled with resentment, during the predominancy of which he determined to proceed in the career of adventure, and endeavour to forget the unkindness of his mistress amidst the avocations of knight-errantry.

Such was the resolution that governed his thoughts,

when he rose in the morning, ordered Crabshaw to saddle Bronzomarte, and demanded a bill of his expense. Before these orders could be executed, the good woman of the house entering his apartment, told him, with marks of concern, that the poor young lady, Miss Meadows, had dropped her pocket-book in the next chamber, where it was found by the hostess, who now presented it unopened.

Our knight having called in Mrs. Oakley and her son as witnesses, unfolded the book without reading one syllable of the contents, and found in it five bank-notes, amounting to two hundred and thirty pounds. Perceiving at once the loss of this treasure might be attended with the most embarrassing consequences to the owner, and reflecting that this was a case which demanded the immediate interposition and assistance of chivalry, he declared that he himself would convey it safely into the hands of Miss Meadows; and desired to know the road she had pursued, that he might set out in quest of her without a moment's delay. It was not without some difficulty that this information was obtained from the postboy, who had been enjoined to secrecy by the lady, and even gratified with a handsome reward for his promised discretion. The same method was used to make him disgorge his trust; he undertook to conduct Sir Launcelot, who hired a post-chaise for despatch, and immediately departed, after having directed his squire to follow his track with the horses.

Yet, whatever haste he made, it is absolutely necessary, for the reader's satisfaction, that we should outstrip the chaise, and visit the ladies before his

arrival. We shall therefore, without circumlocution, premise, that Miss Meadows was no other than that paragon of beauty and goodness, the all-accomplished Miss Aurelia Darnel. She had, with that meekness of resignation peculiar to herself, for some years, submitted to every species of oppression which her uncle's tyranny of disposition could plan, and his unlimited power of guardianship execute, till at length it rose to such a pitch of despotism as she could not endure. He had projected a match between his niece and one Philip Sycamore, Esq., a young man who possessed a pretty considerable estate in the north country; who liked Aurelia's person, but was enamoured of her fortune, and had offered to purchase Anthony's interest and alliance with certain concessions, which could not but be agreeable to a man of loose principles, who would have found it a difficult task to settle the accounts of his wardship.

According to the present estimate of matrimonial felicity, Sycamore might have found admittance as a future son-in-law to any private family of the kingdom. He was by birth a gentleman, tall, straight, and muscular, with a fair, sleek, unmeaning face, that promised more simplicity than ill-nature. His education had not been neglected, and he inherited an estate of five thousand a year. Miss Darnel, however, had penetration enough to discover and despise him, as a strange composition of rapacity and profusion, absurdity and good sense, bashfulness and impudence, self-conceit and diffidence, awkwardness and ostentation, insolence and good-nature, rashness and timidity. He was continually surrounded and preyed

upon by certain vermin called Led Captains and Buffoons, who showed him in leading-strings like a sucking giant, rifled his pockets without ceremony, ridiculed him to his face, traduced his character, and exposed him in a thousand ludicrous attitudes for the diversion of the public; while at the same time he knew their knavery, saw their drift, detested their morals, and despised their understanding. He was so infatuated by indolence of thought, and communication with folly, that he would have rather suffered himself to be led into a ditch with company, than be at the pains of going over a bridge alone; and involved himself in a thousand difficulties, the natural consequences of an error in the first concoction, which, though he plainly saw it, he had not resolution enough to avoid.

Such was the character of Squire Sycamore, who professed himself the rival of Sir Launcelot Greaves in the good graces of Miss Aurelia Darnel. He had in this pursuit persevered with more constancy and fortitude than he ever exerted in any other instance. Being generally needy from extravagance, he was stimulated by his wants, and animated by his vanity, which was artfully instigated by his followers, who hoped to share the spoils of his success. These motives were reinforced by the incessant and eager exhortations of Anthony Darnel, who seeing his ward in the last year of her minority, thought there was no time to be lost in securing his own indemnification, and snatching his niece for ever from the hopes of Sir Launcelot, whom he now hated with redoubled animosity. Finding Aurelia deaf to all his remon-

strances, proof against ill usage, and resolutely averse to the proposed union with Sycamore, he endeavoured to detach her thoughts from Sir Launcelot, by forging tales to the prejudice of his constancy and moral character; and, finally, by recapitulating the proofs and instances of his distraction, which he particularised with the most malicious exaggerations.

In spite of all his arts, he found it impracticable to surmount her objections to the proposed alliance, and therefore changed his battery. Instead of transferring her to the arms of his friend, he resolved to detain her in his own power by a legal claim, which would invest him with the uncontrolled management of her affairs. This was a charge of lunacy, in consequence of which he hoped to obtain a commission, to secure a jury to his wish, and be appointed sole committee of her person, as well as steward on her estate, of which he would then be heir-apparent.

As the first steps towards the execution of this honest scheme, he had subjected Aurelia to the superintendency and direction of an old duenna, who had been formerly the procuress of his pleasures; and hired a new set of servants, who were given to understand, at their first admission, that the young lady was disordered in her brain.

An impression of this nature is easily preserved among servants, when the master of the family thinks his interest is concerned in supporting the imposture. The melancholy produced from her confinement, and the vivacity of her resentment under ill usage, were, by the address of Anthony, and the prepossession of his domestics, perverted into the effects of insanity;

and the same interpretation was strained upon her most indifferent words and actions.

The tidings of Miss Darnel's disorder was carefully circulated in whispers, and soon reached the ears of Mr. Sycamore, who was not at all pleased with the information. From his knowledge of Anthony's disposition, he suspected the truth of the report; and, unwilling to see such a prize ravished as it were from his grasp, he, with the advice and assistance of his myrmidons, resolved to set the captive at liberty, in full hope of turning the adventure to his own advantage; for he argued in this manner: — "If she is in fact *compos mentis*, her gratitude will operate in my behalf, and even prudence will advise her to embrace the proffered asylum from the villany of her uncle. If she is really disordered, it will be no great difficulty to deceive her into marriage, and then I become her trustee of course."

The plan was well conceived, but Sycamore had not discretion enough to keep his own counsel. From weakness and vanity, he blabbed the design, which in a little time was communicated to Anthony Darnel, and he took his precautions accordingly. Being infirm in his own person, and consequently unfit for opposing the violence of some desperadoes, whom he knew to be the satellites of Sycamore, he prepared a private retreat for his ward at the house of an old gentleman, the companion of his youth, whom he had imposed upon with the fiction of her being disordered in her understanding, and amused with a story of a dangerous design upon her person. Thus cautioned and instructed, the gentleman had gone

with his own coach and servants to receive Aurelia and her governante at a third house, to which she had been privately removed from her uncle's habitation; and in this journey it was that she had been so accidentally protected from the violence of the robbers by the interposition and prowess of our adventurer.

As he did not wear his helmet in that exploit, she recognised his features as he passed the coach, and, struck with the apparition, shrieked aloud. She had been assured by her guardian that his design was to convey her to her own house; but perceiving in the sequel that the carriage struck off upon a different road, and finding herself in the hands of strangers, she began to dread a much more disagreeable fate, and conceived doubts and ideas that filled her tender heart with horror and affliction. When she expostulated with the duenna, she was treated like a changeling, admonished to be quiet, and reminded that she was under the direction of those who would manage her with a tender regard to her own welfare, and the honour of her family. When she addressed herself to the old gentleman, who was not much subject to the emotions of humanity, and besides firmly persuaded that she was deprived of her reason, he made no answer, but laid his finger on his mouth by way of enjoining silence.

This mysterious behaviour aggravated the fears of the poor hapless young lady; and her terrors waxed so strong, that when she saw Tom Clarke, whose face she knew, she called aloud for assistance, and even pronounced the name of his patron Sir Launcelot

Greaves, which she imagined might stimulate him the more to attempt something for her deliverance.

The reader has already been informed in what manner the endeavours of Tom and his uncle miscarried. Miss Darnel's new keeper having in the course of his journey halted for refreshment at the Black Lion, of which being landlord, he believed the good woman and her family were entirely devoted to his will and pleasure, Aurelia found an opportunity of speaking in private to Dolly, who had a very prepossessing appearance. She conveyed a purse of money into the hands of this young woman, telling her, while the tears trickled down her cheeks, that she was a young lady of fortune, in danger, as she apprehended, of assassination. This hint, which she communicated in a whisper while the governante stood at the other end of the room, was sufficient to interest the compassionate Dolly in her behalf. As soon as the coach departed, she made her mother acquainted with the transaction; and as they naturally concluded that the young lady expected their assistance, they resolved to approve themselves worthy of her confidence.

Dolly having enlisted in their design a trusty countryman, one of her own professed admirers, they set out together for the house of the gentleman in which the fair prisoner was confined, and waited for her in secret at the end of a pleasant park, in which they naturally concluded she might be indulged with the privilege of taking the air. The event justified their conception; on the very first day of

their watch they saw her approach, accompanied by her duenna. Dolly and her attendant immediately tied their horses to a stake, and retired into a thicket, which Aurelia did not fail to enter. Dolly forthwith appeared, and, taking her by the hand, led her to the horses, one of which she mounted in the utmost hurry and trepidation, while the countryman bound the duenna with a cord prepared for the purpose, gagged her mouth, and tied her to a tree, where he left her to her own meditations. Then he mounted before Dolly, and through unfrequented paths conducted his charge to an inn on the post-road, where a chaise was ready for their reception.

As he refused to proceed farther, lest his absence from his own home should create suspicion, Aurelia rewarded him liberally, but would not part with her faithful Dolly, who indeed had no inclination to be discharged; such an affection and attachment had she already acquired for the amiable fugitive, though she knew neither her story nor her true name. Aurelia thought proper to conceal both, and assumed the fictitious appellation of Meadows, until she should be better acquainted with the disposition and discretion of her new attendant.

The first resolution she could take, in the present flutter of her spirits, was to make the best of her way to London, where she thought she might find an asylum in the house of a female relation, married to an eminent physician, known by the name of Kawdle. In the execution of this hasty resolve, she travelled at a violent rate, from stage to stage, in a carriage drawn by four horses, without halting for necessary

refreshment or repose, until she judged herself out of danger of being overtaken. As she appeared overwhelmed with grief and consternation, the good-natured Dolly endeavoured to alleviate her distress with diverting discourse, and, among other less interesting stories, entertained her with the adventures of Sir Launcelot and Captain Crowe, which she had seen and heard recited while they remained at the Black Lion; nor did she fail to introduce Mr. Thomas Clarke in her narrative, with such a favourable representation of his person and character, as plainly discovered that her own heart had received a rude shock from the irresistible force of his qualifications.

The history of Sir Launcelot Greaves was a theme which effectually fixed the attention of Aurelia, distracted as her ideas must have been by the circumstances of her present situation. The particulars of his conduct since the correspondence between him and her had ceased, she heard with equal concern and astonishment; for, how far soever she deemed herself detached from all possibility of future connexion with that young gentleman, she was not made of such indifferent stuff as to learn without emotion the calamitous disorder of an accomplished youth, whose extraordinary virtues she could not but revere.

As they had deviated from the post-road, taken precautions to conceal their route, and made such progress, that they were now within one day's journey of London, the careful and affectionate Dolly, seeing her dear lady quite exhausted with fatigue, used all her natural rhetoric, which was very power-

ful, mingled with tears that flowed from the heart, in persuading Aurelia to enjoy some repose; and so far she succeeded in the attempt, that for one night the toil of travelling was intermitted. This recess from incredible fatigue was a pause that afforded our adventurer time to overtake them before they reached the metropolis, that vast labyrinth, in which Aurelia might have been for ever lost to his inquiry.

It was in the afternoon of the day which succeeded his departure from the White Hart, that Sir Launcelot arrived at the inn, where Miss Aurelia Darnel had bespoke a dish of tea, and a post-chaise for the next stage. He had by inquiry traced her a considerable way, without ever dreaming who the person really was whom he thus pursued, and now he desired to speak with her attendant. Dolly was not a little surprised to see Sir Launcelot Greaves, of whose character she had conceived a very sublime idea from the narrative of Mr. Thomas Clarke; but she was still more surprised when he gave her to understand that he had charged himself with a pocket-book, containing the bank-notes which Miss Meadows had dropped in the house where they had been threatened with insult. Miss Darnel had not yet discovered her disaster, when her attendant, running into the apartment, presented the prize which she had received from our adventurer, with his compliments to Miss Meadows, implying a request to be admitted into her presence, that he might make a personal tender of his best services.

It is not to be supposed that the amiable Aurelia heard unmoved such a message from a person, whom

her maid discovered to be the identical Sir Launcelot Greaves, whose story she had so lately related; but as the ensuing scene requires fresh attention in the reader, we shall defer it till another opportunity, when his spirits shall be recruited from the fatigue of this chapter.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

EXHIBITING AN INTERVIEW, WHICH, IT IS TO BE HOPED, WILL INTEREST THE CURIOSITY OF THE READER.

THE mind of the delicate Aurelia was strangely agitated by the intelligence which she received with her pocket-book from Dolly. Confounded as she was by the nature of her situation, she at once perceived that she could not, with any regard to the dictates of gratitude, refuse complying with the request of Sir Launcelot; but, in the first hurry of her emotion, she directed Dolly to beg, in her name, that she might be excused for wearing a mask at the interview which he desired, as she had particular reasons, which concerned her peace, for retaining that disguise. Our adventurer submitted to this preliminary with a good grace, as he had nothing in view but the injunction of his order, and the duties of humanity; and he was admitted without further preamble.

When he entered the room, he could not help being struck with the presence of Aurelia. Her stature was improved since he had seen her; her shape was exquisitely formed; and she received him with an air of dignity, which impressed him with a very sublime idea of her person and character. She was

no less affected at the sight of our adventurer, who, though cased in armour, appeared with his head uncovered; and the exercise of travelling had thrown such a glow of health and vivacity on his features, which were naturally elegant and expressive, that we will venture to say, there was not in all England a couple that excelled this amiable pair in personal beauty and accomplishments. Aurelia shone with all the fabled graces of nymph or goddess; and to Sir Launcelot might be applied what the divine poet Ariosto says of the Prince Zerbino:

> Natura il fece e poi ruppe la stampa.
> When Nature stamp'd him, she the die destroy'd.

Our adventurer having made his obeisance to this supposed Miss Meadows, told her, with an air of pleasantry, that although he thought himself highly honoured in being admitted to her presence, and allowed to pay his respects to her, as superior beings are adored, unseen; yet his pleasure would receive a very considerable addition, if she would be pleased to withdraw that invidious veil, that he might have a glimpse of the divinity which it concealed. Aurelia immediately took off her mask, saying with a faltering accent, "I cannot be so ungrateful as to deny such a small favour to a gentleman who has laid me under the most important obligations."

The unexpected apparition of Miss Aurelia Darnel, beaming with all the emanations of ripened beauty, blushing with all the graces of the most lovely confusion, could not but produce a violent effect upon the mind of Sir Launcelot Greaves. He was, indeed,

overwhelmed with a mingled transport of astonishment, admiration, affection, and awe. The colour vanished from his cheeks, and he stood gazing upon her, in silence, with the most emphatic expression of countenance.

Aurelia was infected by his disorder. She began to tremble, and the roses fluctuated on her face. "I cannot forget," said she, "that I owe my life to the courage and humanity of Sir Launcelot Greaves, and that he at the same time rescued from the most dreadful death a dear and venerable parent."—"Would to Heaven she still survived!" cried our adventurer, with great emotion. "She was the friend of my youth, the kind patroness of my felicity! My guardian angel forsook me when she expired! Her last injunctions are deep engraven on my heart!"

While he pronounced these words, she lifted her handkerchief to her fair eyes, and, after some pause, proceeded in a tremulous tone, "I hope, sir—I hope you have—I should be sorry—Pardon me, sir, I cannot reflect upon such an interesting subject unmoved"— Here she fetched a deep sigh, that was accompanied by a flood of tears; while the knight continued to bend his eyes upon her with the utmost eagerness of attention.

Having recollected herself a little, she endeavoured to shift the conversation: "You have been abroad since I had the pleasure to see you—I hope you were agreeably amused in your travels."—"No, madam," said our hero, drooping his head; "I have been unfortunate." When she, with the most enchanting sweetness of benevolence, expressed her concern to hear

he had been unhappy, and her hope that his misfortunes were not past remedy; he lifted up his eyes, and fixing them upon her again, with a look of tender dejection, "Cut off," said he, "from the possession of what my soul held most dear, I wished for death, and was visited by distraction. I have been abandoned by my reason — my youth is for ever blasted."

The tender heart of Aurelia could bear no more — her knees began to totter, the lustre vanished from her eyes, and she fainted in the arms of her attendant. Sir Launcelot, aroused by this circumstance, assisted Dolly in seating her mistress on a couch, where she soon recovered, and saw the knight on his knees before her. "I am still happy," said he, "in being able to move your compassion, though I have been held unworthy of your esteem." — "Do me justice," she replied; "my best esteem has been always inseparably connected with the character of Sir Launcelot Greaves." — "Is it possible?" cried our hero; "then surely I have no reason to complain. If I have moved your compassion, and possess your esteem, I am but one degree short of supreme happiness — that, however, is a gigantic step. O Miss Darnel! when I remember that dear, that melancholy moment." — So saying he gently touched her hand, in order to press it to his lips, and perceived on her finger the very individual ring which he had presented in her mother's presence, as an interchanged testimony of plighted faith. Starting at the well-known object, the sight of which conjured up a strange confusion of ideas, "This," said he, "was once the pledge of something

still more cordial than esteem." Aurelia, blushing at this remark, while her eyes lightened with unusual vivacity, replied, in a severer tone, "Sir, you best know how it lost its original signification." — "By Heaven! I do not, madam!" exclaimed our adventurer. "With me it was ever held a sacred idea throned within my heart, cherished with such fervency of regard, with such reverence of affection, as the devout anchorite more unreasonably pays to those sainted reliques that constitute the object of his adoration." — "And, like those reliques," answered Miss Darnel, "I have been insensible of my votary's devotion. A saint I must have been, or something more, to know the sentiments of your heart by inspiration."

"Did I forbear," said he, "to express, to repeat, to enforce the dictates of the purest passion that ever warmed the human breast, until I was denied access, and formally discarded by that cruel dismission?" — "I must beg your pardon, sir," cried Aurelia, interrupting him hastily, "I know not what you mean." — "That fatal sentence," said he, "if not pronounced by your own lips, at least written by your own fair hand, which drove me out an exile for ever from the paradise of your affection." — "I would not," she replied, "do Sir Launcelot Greaves the injury to suppose him capable of imposition; but you talk of things to which I am an utter stranger. I have a right, sir, to demand of your honour, that you will not impute to me your breaking off a connexion, which — I would — rather wish — had never" — "Heaven and earth! what do I hear?" cried our

impatient knight; "have I not the baleful letter to produce? What else but Miss Darnel's explicit and express declaration could have destroyed the sweetest hope that ever cheered my soul; could have obliged me to resign all claim to that felicity for which alone I wished to live; could have filled my bosom with unutterable sorrow and despair; could have even divested me of reason, and driven me from the society of men, a poor, forlorn, wandering lunatic, such as you see me now prostrate at your feet; all the blossoms of my youth withered, all the honours of my family decayed?"

Aurelia looking wishfully at her lover, "Sir," said she, "you overwhelm me with amazement and anxiety! you are imposed upon, if you have received any such letter. You are deceived, if you thought Aurelia Darnel could be so insensible, ungrateful, and — inconstant."

This last word she pronounced with some hesitation, and a downcast look, while her face underwent a total suffusion, and the knight's heart began to palpitate with all the violence of emotion. He eagerly imprinted a kiss upon her hand, exclaiming, in interrupted phrase, "Can it be possible? — Heaven grant — Sure this is no illusion! — O madam! — shall I call you my Aurelia? My heart is bursting with a thousand fond thoughts and presages. You shall see that dire paper which has been the source of all my woes — it is the constant companion of my travels — last night I nourished my chagrin with the perusal of its horrid contents."

Aurelia expressed great impatience to view the

cruel forgery, for such she assured him it must be. But he could not gratify her desire, till the arrival of his servant with the portmanteau. In the meantime, tea was called. The lovers were seated. He looked and languished; she flushed and faltered. All was doubt and delirium, fondness and flutter. Their mutual disorder communicated itself to the kind-hearted sympathising Dolly, who had been witness to the interview, and deeply affected at the disclosure of the scene. Unspeakable was her surprise, when she found her mistress. Miss Meadows, was no other than the celebrated Aurelia Darnel, whose eulogium she had heard so eloquently pronounced by her sweetheart, Mr. Thomas Clarke; a discovery which still more endeared her lady to her affection. She had wept plentifully at the progress of their mutual explanation, and was now so disconcerted, that she scarce knew the meaning of the orders she had received. She set the kettle on the table, and placed the tea-board on the fire. Her confusion, by attracting the notice of her mistress, helped to relieve her from her own embarrassing situation. She, with her own delicate hands, rectified the mistake of Dolly, who still continued to sob, and said, "Yau may think, my Leady Darnel, as haw I 'aive yeaten hool-cheese; but it y'an't soa. I'se think, vor mai peart, as how I 'aive bean bewitched."

Sir Launcelot could not help smiling at the simplicity of Dolly, whose goodness of heart and attachment Aurelia did not fail to extol, as soon as her back was turned. It was in consequence of this commendation, that, the next time she entered the room,

our adventurer, for the first time, considered her face, and seemed to be struck with her features. He asked her some questions, which she could not answer to his satisfaction; applauded her regard for her lady, and assured her of his friendship and protection. He now begged to know the cause that obliged his Aurelia to travel at such a rate, and in such an equipage; and she informed him of those particulars which we have already communicated to our reader.

Sir Launcelot glowed with resentment, when he understood how his dear Aurelia had been oppressed by her perfidious and cruel guardian. He bit his nether lip, rolled his eyes around, started from his seat, and striding across the room, "I remember," said he, "the dying words of her who now is a saint in heaven: 'That violent man, my brother-in-law, who is Aurelia's sole guardian, will thwart her wishes with every obstacle that brutal resentment and implacable malice can contrive.' What followed, it would ill become me to repeat. But she concluded with these words: 'The rest we must leave to the dispensations of Providence.' Was it not Providence that sent me hither to guard and protect the injured Aurelia?" Then turning to Miss Darnel, whose eyes streamed with tears, he added, "Yes, divine creature! Heaven, careful of your safety, and in compassion to my sufferings, hath guided me hither, in this mysterious manner, that I might defend you from violence, and enjoy this transition from madness to deliberation, from despair to felicity."

So saying, he approached this amiable mourner,

this fragrant flower of beauty, glittering with the dew-drops of the morning; this sweetest, and gentlest, loveliest ornament of human nature. He gazed upon her with looks of love ineffable; he sat down by her; he pressed her soft hand in his; he began to fear that all he saw was the flattering vision of a distempered brain; he looked and sighed, and, turning up his eyes to heaven, breathed, in broken murmurs, the chaste raptures of his soul. The tenderness of this communication was too painful to be long endured. Aurelia industriously interposed other subjects of discourse, that his attention might not be dangerously overcharged, and the afternoon passed insensibly away.

Though he had determined, in his own mind, never more to quit this idol of his soul, they had not yet concerted any plan of conduct, when their happiness was all at once interrupted by a repetition of cries, denoting horror; and a servant coming in, said he believed some rogues were murdering a traveller on the highway. The supposition of such distress operated like gunpowder on the disposition of our adventurer, who, without considering the situation of Aurelia, and indeed without seeing, or being capable to think on her or any other subject for the time being, ran directly to the stable, and, mounting the first horse which he found saddled, issued out in the twilight, having no other weapon but his sword.

He rode full speed to the spot whence the cries seemed to proceed; but they sounded more remote as he advanced. Nevertheless, he followed them to

a considerable distance from the road, over fields, ditches, and hedges; and at last came so near, that he could plainly distinguish the voice of his own squire, Timothy Crabshaw, bellowing for mercy, with hideous vociferation. Stimulated by this recognition, he redoubled his career in the dark, till at length his horse plunged into a hole, the nature of which he could not comprehend; but he found it impracticable to disengage him. It was with some difficulty that he himself clambered over a ruined wall, and regained the open ground. Here he groped about, in the utmost impatience of anxiety, ignorant of the place, mad with vexation for the fate of his unfortunate squire, and between whiles invaded with a pang of concern for Aurelia, left among strangers, unguarded, and alarmed.

In the midst of this emotion, he bethought himself of hallooing aloud, that, in case he should be in the neighbourhood of any inhabited place, he might be heard and assisted. He accordingly practised this expedient, which was not altogether without effect; for he was immediately answered by an old friend, no other than his own steed Bronzomarte, who, hearing his master's voice, neighed strenuously at a small distance. The knight, being well acquainted with the sound, heard it with astonishment, and, advancing in the right direction, found his noble charger fastened to a tree. He forthwith untied and mounted him; then, laying the reins upon his neck, allowed him to choose his own path, in which he began to travel with equal steadiness and expedition. They had not proceeded far, when the

knight's ears were again saluted by the cries of Crabshaw; which Bronzomarte no sooner heard, than he pricked up his ears, neighed, and quickened his pace, as if he had been sensible of the squire's distress, and hastened to his relief. Sir Launcelot, notwithstanding his own disquiet, could not help observing and admiring this generous sensibility of his horse. He began to think himself some hero of romance, mounted upon a winged steed, inspired with reason, directed by some humane enchanter, who pitied virtue in distress. All circumstances considered, it is no wonder that the commotion in the mind of our adventurer produced some such delirium. All night he continued the chase; the voice, which was repeated at intervals, still retreating before him, till the morning began to appear in the east, when, by divers piteous groans, he was directed to the corner of a wood, where he beheld his miserable squire stretched upon the grass, and Gilbert feeding by him altogether unconcerned, the helmet and the lance suspended at the saddle-bow, and the portmanteau safely fixed upon the crupper.

The knight, riding up to Crabshaw, with equal surprise and concern, asked what had brought him there? and Timothy, after some pause, during which he surveyed his master with a rueful aspect, answered, "The devil."—"One would imagine, indeed, you had some such conveyance," said Sir Launcelot. "I have followed your cries since last evening, I know not how nor whither, and never could come up with you till this moment. But, say, what damage have you sustained, that you lie in

that wretched posture, and groan so dismally?" — "I can't guess," replied the squire, "if it bean't that mai hoole carcase is drilled into oilet hools, and my flesh pinched into a jelly." — "How! wherefore!" cried the knight; "who were the miscreants that treated you in such a barbarous manner? Do you know the ruffians?" — "I know nothing at all," answered the peevish squire, "but that I was tormented by vive houndred and vifty thousand legions of devils, and there's an end oon't." — "Well, you must have a little patience, Crabshaw — there's a salve for every sore." — "Yaw mought as well tell ma, for every zow there's a zirreverence." — "For a man in your condition, methinks you talk very much at your ease — try if you can get up and mount Gilbert, that you may be conveyed to some place where you can have proper assistance. — So — well done — cheerly!"

Timothy actually made an effort to rise, but fell down again, and uttered a dismal yell. Then his master exhorted him to take advantage of a park wall, by which he lay, and raise himself gradually upon it. Crabshaw, eyeing him askance, said, by way of reproach, for his not alighting and assisting him in person, "Thatch your house with t—d, and you'll have more teachers than reachers." — Having pronounced this inelegant adage, he made shift to stand upon his legs; and now, the knight lending a hand, was mounted upon Gilbert, though not without a world of ohs! and ahs! and other ejaculations of pain and impatience.

As they jogged on together, our adventurer en-

deavoured to learn the particulars of the disaster which had befallen the squire; but all the information he could obtain, amounted to a very imperfect sketch of the adventure. By dint of a thousand interrogations, he understood, that Crabshaw had been, in the preceding evening, encountered by three persons on horseback, with Venetian masks on their faces, which he mistook for their natural features, and was terrified accordingly. That they not only presented pistols to his breast, and led his horse out of the highway; but pricked him with goads, and pinched him, from time to time, till he screamed with the torture. That he was led through unfrequented places across the country, sometimes at an easy trot, sometimes at full gallop, and tormented all night by those hideous demons, who vanished at daybreak, and left him lying on the spot where he was found by his master.

This was a mystery which our hero could by no means unriddle. It was the more unaccountable, as the squire had not been robbed of his money, horses, and baggage. He was even disposed to believe that Crabshaw's brain was disordered, and the whole account he had given no more than a mere chimera. This opinion, however, he could no longer retain, when he arrived at an inn on the post-road, and found, upon examination, that Timothy's lower extremities were covered with blood, and all the rest of his body speckled with livid marks of contusion. But he was still more chagrined when the landlord informed him, that he was thirty miles distant from the place where he had left Aurelia, and that his way

lay through cross-roads, which were almost impassable at that season of the year. Alarmed at this intelligence, he gave directions that his squire should be immediately conveyed to bed in a comfortable chamber, as he complained more and more; and, indeed, was seized with a fever, occasioned by the fatigue, the pain, and terror he had undergone. A neighbouring apothecary being called, and giving it as his opinion that he could not for some days be in a condition to travel, his master deposited a sum of money in his hands, desiring he might be properly attended till he should hear further. Then mounting Bronzomarte, he set out with a guide for the place he had left, not without a thousand fears and perplexities, arising from the reflection of having left the jewel of his heart with such precipitation.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

WHICH, IT IS TO BE HOPED, THE READER WILL FIND AN AGREEABLE MEDLEY OF MIRTH AND MADNESS, SENSE AND ABSURDITY.

IT was not without reason that our adventurer afflicted himself; his fears were but too prophetic. When he alighted at the inn, which he had left so abruptly the preceding evening, he ran directly to the apartment where he had been so happy in Aurelia's company; but her he saw not — all was solitary. Turning to the woman of the house, who had followed him into the room, "Where is the lady?" cried he, in a tone of impatience. Mine hostess screwing up her features into a very demure aspect, said she saw so many ladies she could not pretend to know who he meant. "I tell thee, woman," exclaimed the knight, in a louder accent, "thou never sawest such another — I mean that miracle of beauty" —"Very like," replied the dame, as she retired to the room door. "Husband, here's one as axes concerning a miracle of beauty; hi, hi, hi. Can you give him any information about this miracle of beauty? O la! hi, hi, hi."

Instead of answering this question, the innkeeper advancing, and surveying Sir Launcelot, "Friend," said he, "you are the person that carried off my horse

out of the stable." — "Tell me not of a horse — where is the young lady?" — "Now, I will tell you of the horse, and I'll make you find him too before you and I part." — "Wretched animal! how dar'st thou dally with my impatience? Speak, or despair — what is become of Miss Meadows? Say, did she leave this place of her own accord, or was she — hah! speak — answer, or by the powers above" — "I'll answer you flat — she you call Miss Meadows is in very good hands — so you may make yourself easy on that score." — "Sacred Heaven! explain your meaning, miscreant, or I'll make you a dreadful example to all the insolent publicans of the realm." So saying, he seized him with one hand and dashed him on the floor, set one foot on his belly, and kept him trembling in that prostrate attitude. The ostler and waiter flying to the assistance of their master, our adventurer unsheathed his sword, declaring he would dismiss their souls from their bodies, and exterminate the whole family from the face of the earth, if they would not immediately give him the satisfaction he required.

The hostess being by this time terrified almost out of her senses, fell on her knees before him, begging he would spare their lives, and promising to declare the whole truth. He would not, however, remove his foot from the body of her husband until she told him, that in less than half an hour after he had sallied out upon the supposed robbers, two chaises arrived, each drawn by four horses; that two men, armed with pistols, alighted from one of them, laid violent hands upon the young lady; and, notwithstanding her

struggling and shrieking, forced her into the other carriage, in which was an infirm gentleman, who called himself her guardian; that the maid was left to the care of a third servant, to follow with a third chaise, which was got ready with all possible despatch, while the other two proceeded at full speed on the road to London. It was by this communicative lacquey the people of the house were informed that the old gentleman his master was Squire Darnel, the young lady his niece and ward, and our adventurer a needy sharper who wanted to make a prey of her fortune.

The knight, fired even almost to frenzy by this intimation, spurned the carcase of his host; and, his eye gleaming terror, rushed into the yard, in order to mount Bronzomarte and pursue the ravisher, when he was diverted from his purpose by a new incident.

One of the postillions, who had driven the chaise in which Dolly was conveyed, happened to arrive at that instant; when, seeing our hero, he ran up to him cap in hand, and, presenting a letter, accosted him in these words: "Please your noble honour, if your honour be Sir Launcelot Greaves of the West Riding, here's a letter from a gentlewoman, that I promised to deliver into your honour's own hands."

The knight, snatching the letter with the utmost avidity, broke it up, and found the contents couched in these terms: —

"Honoured Sir, — The man az gi'en me leave to lat yaw knaw my dear leady is going to Loondon with her unkle Squaire Darnel. Be not conzarned, honoured sir, vor I'se take it on mai laife to let yaw knaw wheare

we be zettled, if zobe I can vind where you loadge in Loondon. The man zays yaw may put it in the pooblic prints. I houp the bareheir will be honest enuff to deliver this scrowl; and that your honour will pardon

"Your umbil servant to command,

"DOROTHY COWSLIP.

"*P. S.* — Please my kaind sarvice to laayer Clarke. Squire Darnel's man is very civil vor sartain; but I 'ave no thoughts on him I 'll assure yaw. Marry hap, worse ware may have a better chap, as the zaying goes."

Nothing could be more seasonable than the delivery of this billet, which he had no sooner perused than his reflection returned, and he entered into a serious deliberation with his own heart. He considered that Aurelia was by this time far beyond a possibility of being overtaken, and that by a precipitate pursuit he should only expose his own infirmities. He confided in the attachment of his mistress, and in the fidelity of her maid, who would find opportunities of communicating her sentiments by means of this lacquey, of whom he perceived by the letter she had already made a conquest. He therefore resolved to bridle his impatience, to proceed leisurely to London, and, instead of taking any rash step which might induce Anthony Darnel to remove his niece from that city, remain in seeming quiet until she should be settled, and her guardian returned to the country. Aurelia had mentioned to him the name of Doctor Kawdle, and from him he expected in due time to receive the most interesting information.

These reflections had an instantaneous effect upon our hero, whose rage immediately subsided, and whose visage gradually resumed its natural cast of courtesy and good-humour. He forthwith gratified the postillion with such a remuneration as sent him dancing into the kitchen, where he did not fail to extol the generosity and immense fortune of Sir Launcelot Greaves.

Our adventurer's next step was to see Bronzomarte properly accommodated; then he ordered a refreshment for himself, and retired into an apartment, where mine host with his wife and all the servants waited on him to beseech his honour to forgive their impertinence, which was owing to their ignorance of his honour's quality, and the false information they had received from the gentleman's servant. He had too much magnanimity to retain the least resentment against such inconsiderable objects. He not only pardoned them without hesitation, but assured the landlord he would be accountable for the horse, which, however, was that same evening brought home by a countryman, who had found him pounded, as it were, within the walls of a ruined cottage. As the knight had been greatly fatigued without enjoying any rest for eight-and-forty hours, he resolved to indulge himself with one night's repose, and then return to the place where he had left his squire indisposed; for by this time even his concern for Timothy had recurred.

On a candid scrutiny of his own heart, he found himself much less unhappy than he had been before his interview with Aurelia; for, instead of being as

formerly tormented with the pangs of despairing love, which had actually unsettled his understanding, he was now happily convinced that he had inspired the tender breast of Aurelia with mutual affection; and, though she was invidiously snatched from his embrace in the midst of such endearments as had wound up his soul to ecstasy and transport, he did not doubt of being able to rescue her from the power of an inhuman kinsman, whose guardianship would soon of course expire; and in the meantime he rested with the most perfect dependence on her constancy and virtue.

As he next day crossed the country, ruminating on the disaster that had befallen his squire, and could now compare circumstances coolly, he easily comprehended the whole scheme of that adventure, which was no other than an artifice of Anthony Darnel and his emissaries to draw him from the inn, where he proposed to execute his design upon the innocent Aurelia. He took it for granted that the uncle, having been made acquainted with his niece's elopement, had followed her track by the help of such information as he received, from one stage to another; and that, receiving more particulars at the White Hart touching Sir Launcelot, he had formed the scheme in which Crabshaw was an involuntary instrument towards the seduction of his master.

Amusing himself with these and other cogitations, our hero in the afternoon reached the place of his distination, and, entering the inn where Timothy had been left at sick quarters, chanced to meet the apothecary retiring precipitately in a very unsavoury

pickle from the chamber of his patient. When he inquired about the health of his squire, this retainer to medicine, wiping himself all the while with a napkin, answered in manifest confusion, that he apprehended him to be in a very dangerous way from an inflammation of the *piamater*, which had produced a most furious delirium. Then he proceeded to explain, in technical terms, the method of cure he had followed; and concluded with telling him the poor squire's brain was so outrageously disordered, that he had rejected all administration, and just thrown an urinal in his face.

The knight's humanity being alarmed at this intelligence, he resolved that Crabshaw should have the benefit of further advice, and asked if there was not a physician in the place? The apothecary, after some interjections of hesitation, owned there was a doctor in the village, an odd sort of a humourist; but he believed he had not much to do in the way of his profession, and was not much used to the forms of prescription. He was counted a scholar, to be sure, but as to his medical capacity — he would not take upon him to say. "No matter," cried Sir Launcelot, "he may strike out some lucky thought for the benefit of the patient, and I desire you will call him instantly."

While the apothecary was absent on this service, our adventurer took it in his head to question the landlord about the character of this physician, which had been so unfavourably represented, and received the following information: —

"For my peart, measter, I knows nothing amiss of

the doctor — he's a quiet sort of an inoffensive man; uses my house sometimes, and pays for what he has, like the rest of my customers. They says he deals very little in physic stuff, but cures his patients with fasting and water-gruel, whereby he can't expect the 'pothecary to be his friend. You knows, master, one must live, and let live, as the saying is. I must say, he, for the value of three guineas, set up my wife's constitution in such a manner, that I have saved within these two years, I believe, forty pounds in 'pothecary's bills. But what of that? Every man must eat, thof at another's expense; and I should be in a deadly hole myself if all my customers should take it in their heads to drink nothing but water-gruel, because it is good for the constitution. Thank God, I have as good a constitution as e'er a man in England, but for all that, I and my whole family bleed and purge, and take a diet-drink twice a year, by way of serving the 'pothecary, who is a very honest man, and a very good neighbour."

Their conversation was interrupted by the return of the apothecary with the doctor, who had very little of the faculty in his appearance. He was dressed remarkably plain; seemed to be turned of fifty; had a careless air, and a sarcastical turn in his countenance. Before he entered the sick man's chamber, he asked some questions concerning the disease; and when the apothecary, pointing to his own head, said, "It lies all here," the doctor, turning to Sir Launcelot, replied, "If that be all there's nothing in it.'

Upon a more particular inquiry about the symp-

toms, he was told that the blood was seemingly viscous, and salt upon the tongue; the urine remarkably acrosaline; and the fæces atrabilious and fœtid. When the doctor said he would engage to find the same phenomena in every healthy man of the three kingdoms, the apothecary added, that the patient was manifestly comatous, and moreover afflicted with griping pains and borborygmata. "A f—t for your borborygmata," cried the physician; "what has been done?" To this question, he replied, that venesection had been three times performed; that a vesicatory had been applied *inter scapulas;* that the patient had taken occasionally of a cathartic apozem, and between whiles, alexipharmic boluses and neutral draughts. — "Neutral, indeed," said the doctor; "so neutral, that I'll be crucified if ever they declare either for the patient or the disease." So saying, he brushed into Crabshaw's chamber, followed by our adventurer, who was almost suffocated at his first entrance. The day was close; the window-shutters were fastened; a huge fire blazed in the chimney; thick harateen curtains were close drawn round the bed, where the wretched squire lay extended under an enormous load of blankets. The nurse, who had all the exteriors of a bawd given to drink, sat stewing in this apartment like a damned soul in some infernal bagnio; but rising when the company entered, made her curtsies with great decorum. — "Well," said the doctor, "how does your patient, nurse?" — "Blessed be God for it, I hope in a fair way. To be sure his apozem has had a blessed effect — five-and-twenty stools since three o'clock in the morning. But

then, a'would not suffer the blisters to be put upon his thighs. Good lack! a'has been mortally obstropolous, and out of his senses all this blessed day." — "You lie," cried the squire, "I an't out of my seven senses, thof I'm half mad with vexation."

The doctor having withdrawn the curtain, the hapless squire appeared very pale and ghastly; and having surveyed his master with a rueful aspect, addressed him in these words: "Sir Knight, I beg a boon. Be pleased to tie a stone about the neck of the apothecary, and a halter about the neck of the nurse, and throw the one into the next river, and the other over the next tree, and in so doing you will do a charitable deed to your fellow-creatures; for he and she do the devil's work in partnership, and have sent many a score of their betters home to him before their time." — "Oh, he begins to talk sensibly." — "Have a good heart," said the physician. "What is your disorder?" — "Physic." — "What do you chiefly complain of?" — "The doctor." — "Does your head ache?" — "Yea, with impertinence." — "Have you a pain in your back?" — "Yes, where the blister lies." — "Are you sick at stomach?" — "Yes, with hunger." — "Do you feel any shiverings?" — "Always at sight of the apothecary." — "Do you perceive any load in your bowels?" — "I would the apothecary's conscience was as clear." — "Are you thirsty?" — "Not thirsty enough to drink barley-water." — "Be pleased to look into his fauces," said the apothecary; "he has got a rough tongue, and a very foul mouth, I'll assure you." — "I have

known that the case with some limbs of the faculty, where they stood more in need of correction than of physic. — Well, my honest friend, since you have already undergone the proper purgations in due form, and say you have no other disease than the doctor, we will set you on your legs again without further question. Here, nurse, open that window, and throw these phials into the street. Now lower the curtain, without shutting the casement, that the man may not be stifled in his own steam. In the next place, take off two-thirds of these coals, and one-third of these blankets. — How dost feel now, my heart?" — "I should feel heart-whole, if so be as yow would throw the noorse a'ter the bottles, and the 'pothecary a'ter the noorse, and oorder me a pound of chops for my dinner, for I be so hoongry, I could eat a horse behind the saddle."

The apothecary, seeing what passed, retired of his own accord, holding up his hands in sign of astonishment. The nurse was dismissed in the same breath. Crabshaw rose, dressed himself without assistance, and made a hearty meal on the first eatable that presented itself to view. The knight passed the evening with the physician, who, from his first appearance, concluded he was mad; but, in the course of the conversation, found means to resign that opinion without adopting any other in lieu of it, and parted with him under all the impatience of curiosity. The knight, on his part, was very well entertained with the witty sarcasms and erudition of the doctor, who appeared to be a sort of cynic philosopher tinctured with misanthropy, and at open war with the whole

body of apothecaries, whom however it was by no means his interest to disoblige.

Next day, Crabshaw, being to all appearance perfectly recovered, our adventurer reckoned with the apothecary, paid the landlord, and set out on his return for the London road, resolving to lay aside his armour at some distance from the metropolis; for, ever since his interview with Aurelia, his fondness for chivalry had been gradually abating. As the torrent of his despair had disordered the current of his sober reflection, so now, as that despair subsided, his thoughts began to flow deliberately in their ancient channel. All day long he regaled his imagination with plans of connubial happiness, formed on the possession of the incomparable Aurelia; determined to wait with patience, until the law should supersede the authority of her guardian, rather than adopt any violent expedient which might hazard the interest of his passion.

He had for some time travelled in the turnpike road, when his reverie was suddenly interrupted by a confused noise; and when he lifted up his eyes he beheld at a little distance a rabble of men and women, variously armed with flails, pitchforks, poles, and muskets, acting offensively against a strange figure on horseback, who, with a kind of lance, laid about him with incredible fury. Our adventurer was not so totally abandoned by the spirit of chivalry, to see without emotion a single knight in danger of being overpowered by such a multitude of adversaries. Without staying to put on his helmet, he ordered Crabshaw to follow him in the charge against those

plebeians. Then couching his lance, and giving Bronzomarte the spur, he began his career with such impetuosity as overturned all that happened to be in his way: and intimidated the rabble to such a degree, that they retired before him like a flock of sheep, the greater part of them believing he was the devil in propria persona. He came in the very nick of time to save the life of the other errant, against whom three loaded muskets were actually levelled, at the very instant that our adventurer began his charge. The unknown knight was so sensible of the seasonable interposition, that, riding up to our hero, "Brother," said he, "this is the second time you have holp me off, when I was bump ashore. — Bess Mizzen, I must say, is no more than a leaky bum-boat, in comparison of the glorious galley you want to man. I desire that henceforth we may cruise in the same latitudes, brother: and I 'll be d—ned if I don't stand by you as long as I have a stick standing, or can carry a rag of canvas."

By this address our knight recognised the novice Captain Crowe, who had found means to accommodate himself with a very strange suit of armour. By way of helmet, he wore one of the caps used by the light horse, with straps buckled under his chin, and contrived in such a manner as to conceal his whole visage, except the eyes. Instead of cuirass, mail, greaves, and other pieces of complete armour, he was cased in a postillion's leathern jerkin, covered with thin plates of tinned iron. His buckler was a pot-lid, his lance a hop-pole shod with iron, and a basket-hilt broadsword, like that of Hudibras, depended by

a broad buff belt, that girded his middle. His feet were defended by jack-boots, and his hands by the gloves of a trooper. Sir Launcelot would not lose time in examining particulars, as he perceived some mischief had been done, and that the enemy had rallied at a distance; he therefore commanded Crowe to follow him, and rode off with great expedition; but he did not perceive his squire was taken prisoner; nor did the captain recollect that his nephew, Tom Clarke, had been disabled and secured in the beginning of the fray. The truth is, the poor captain had been so belaboured about the pate, that it was a wonder he remembered his own name.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

CONTAINING ADVENTURES OF CHIVALRY EQUALLY NEW AND SURPRISING.

THE knight Sir Launcelot, and the novice Crowe, retreated with equal order and expedition to the distance of half a league from the field of battle, where the former, halting, proposed to make a lodgment in a very decent house of entertainment, distinguished by the sign of St. George of Cappadocia encountering the dragon, an achievement in which temporal and spiritual chivalry were happily reconciled. Two such figures alighting at the inn gate did not pass through the yard unnoticed and unadmired by the guests and attendants, some of whom fairly took to their heels, on the supposition that these outlandish creatures were the avant-couriers or heralds of a French invasion. The fears and doubts, however, of those who ventured to stay were soon dispelled, when our hero accosted them in the English tongue, and with the most courteous demeanour desired to be shown into an apartment.

Had Captain Crowe been spokesman, perhaps their suspicions would not have so quickly subsided, for he was, in reality, a very extraordinary novice, not only

in chivalry, but also in his external appearance, and particularly in those dialects of the English language which are used by the terrestrial animals of this kingdom. He desired the ostler to take his horse in tow, and bring him to his moorings in a safe riding. He ordered the waiter, who showed them into a parlour, to bear a hand, ship his oars, mind his helm, and bring alongside a short allowance of brandy or grog, that he might cant a slug into his bread-room, for there was such a heaving and pitching, that he believed he should shift his ballast. The fellow understood no part of this address but the word *brandy*, at mention of which he disappeared. Then Crowe, throwing himself into an elbow chair, "Stop my hawse-holes," cried he, "I can't think what 's the matter, brother; but, egad, my head sings and simmers like a pot of chowder. My eyesight yaws to and again, d' ye see; then there 's such a walloping and whushing in my hold — smite me — Lord have mercy upon us. Here, you swab, ne'er mind the glass, hand me the noggin."

The latter part of this address was directed to the waiter, who had returned with a quartern of brandy, which Crowe, snatching eagerly, started into his bread-room at one cant. Indeed, there was no time to be lost, inasmuch as he seemed to be on the verge of fainting away when he swallowed this cordial, by which he was instantaneously revived.

He then desired the servant to unbuckle the straps of his helmet, but this was a task which the drawer could not perform, even though assisted with the good offices of Sir Launcelot, for the head and jaws

were so much swelled with the discipline they had undergone, that the straps and buckles lay buried, as it were, in pits formed by the tumefaction of the adjacent parts.

Fortunately for the novice, a neighbouring surgeon passed by the door on horseback, a circumstance which the waiter, who saw him from the window, no sooner disclosed, than the knight had recourse to his assistance. This practitioner having viewed the whole figure, and more particularly the head of Crowe, in silent wonder, proceeded to feel his pulse, and then declared, that as the inflammation was very great, and going on with violence to its *acme*, it would be necessary to begin with copious phlebotomy, and then to empty the intestinal canal. So saying, he began to strip the arm of the captain, who perceiving his aim, "Avast, brother," cried he, "you go the wrong way to work; you may as well rummage the afterhold when the damage is in the forecastle; I shall right again when my jaws are unhooped."

With these words he drew a clasp-knife from his pocket, and, advancing to a glass, applied it so vigorously to the leathern straps of his headpiece, that the gordian knot was cut, without any other damage to his face than a moderate scarification, which, added to the tumefaction of features naturally strong, and a whole week's growth of a very bushy beard, produced on the whole a most hideous caricatura. After all, there was a necessity for the administration of the surgeon, who found divers contusions on different parts of the skull, which even

the tin cap had not been able to protect from the weapons of the rustics.

These being shaved and dressed *secundum artem*, and the operator dismissed with a proper acknowledgment, our knight detached one of the post-boys to the field of action for intelligence concerning Mr. Clarke and squire Timothy, and, in the interim, desired to know the particulars of Crowe's adventures since he parted from him at the White Hart.

A connected relation, in plain English, was what he had little reason to expect from the novice, who, nevertheless, exerted his faculties to the uttermost for his satisfaction. He give him to understand, that in steering his course to Birmingham, where he thought of fitting himself with tackle, he had fallen in, by accident, at a public-house, with an itinerant tinker, in the very act of mending a kettle; that, seeing him do his business like an able workman, he had applied to him for advice, and the tinker, after having considered the subject, had undertaken to make him such a suit of armour as neither sword nor lance should penetrate; that they adjourned to the next town, where the leather coat, the plates of tinned iron, the lance, and the broadsword, were purchased, together with a copper saucepan, which the artist was now at work upon in converting it to a shield; but in the meantime, the captain, being impatient to begin his career of chivalry, had accommodated himself with a pot-lid, and taken to the highway, notwithstanding all the entreaties, tears, and remonstrances of his nephew, Tom Clarke, who could not however be prevailed

upon to leave him in the dangerous voyage he had undertaken.

That this being but the second day of his journey, he descried five or six men on horseback bearing up full in his teeth, upon which he threw his sails aback, and prepared for action; that he hailed them at a considerable distance, and bade them bring to; when they came alongside, notwithstanding his hail, he ordered them to clew up their courses, and furl their topsails, otherwise he would be foul of their quarters; that, hearing this salute, they luffed all at once, till their cloth shook in the wind; then he hallooed in a loud voice, that his sweetheart, Bessalia Mizzen, were the broad pendant of beauty, to which they must strike their topsails on pain of being sent to the bottom; that, after having eyed him for some time with astonishment, they clapped on all their sails, some of them running under his stern, and others athwart his forefoot, and got clear off; that, not satisfied with running ahead, they all of a sudden tacked about, and one of them boarding him on the lee-quarter, gave him such a drubbing about his upper works, that the lights danced in his lanterns; that he returned the salute with his hop-pole so effectually that his aggressor broached to in the twinkling of a handspike, and then he was engaged with all the rest of the enemy, except one, who sheered off, and soon returned with a mosquito fleet of small craft, who had done him considerable damage, and, in all probability, would have made prize of him, had n't he been brought off by the knight's gallantry. He said, that in the beginning of the

conflict Tom Clarke rode up to the foremost of the enemy, as he did suppose in order to prevent hostilities, but before he got up to him near enough to hold discourse, he was pooped with a sea that almost sent him to the bottom, and then towed off he knew not whither.

Crowe had scarce finished his narration, which consisted of broken hints and unconnected explosions of sea terms, when a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who acted in the commission of the peace, arrived at the gate, attended by a constable, who had in custody the bodies of Thomas Clarke and Timothy Crabshaw, surrounded by five men on horseback, and an innumerable posse of men, women, and children, on foot. The captain, who always kept a good look-out, no sooner descried this cavalcade and procession, than he gave notice to Sir Launcelot, and advised that they should crowd away with all the cloth they could carry. Our adventurer was of another opinion, and determined, at any rate, to procure the enlargement of the prisoners.

The justice, ordering his attendants to stay without the gate, sent his compliments to Sir Launcelot Greaves, and desired to speak with him for a few minutes. He was immediately admitted, and could not help staring at sight of Crowe, who, by this time, had no remains of the human physiognomy, so much was the swelling increased and the skin discoloured. The gentleman, whose name was Mr. Elmy, having made a polite apology for the liberty he had taken, proceeded to unfold his business. He said, information had been lodged with him, as a justice of the

peace, against two armed men on horseback, who had stopped five farmers on the king's highway, put them in fear and danger of their lives, and even assaulted, maimed, and wounded divers persons, contrary to the king's peace, and in violation of the statute; that, by the description, he supposed the knight and his companion to be the persons against whom the complaint had been lodged; and, understanding his quality from Mr. Clarke, whom he had known in London, he was come to wait upon him, and, if possible, effect an accommodation.

Our adventurer having thanked him for the polite and obliging manner in which he proceeded, frankly told him the whole story, as it had been just related by the captain; and Mr. Elmy had no reason to doubt the truth of the narrative, as it confirmed every circumstance which Clarke had before reported. Indeed, Tom had been very communicative to this gentleman, and made him acquainted with the whole history of Sir Launcelot Greaves, as well as with the whimsical resolution of his uncle, Captain Crowe. Mr. Elmy now told the knight, that the persons whom the captain had stopped were farmers, returning from a neighbouring market, a set of people naturally boorish, and at that time elevated with ale to an uncommon pitch of insolence; that one of them, in particular, called Prickle, was the most quarrelsome fellow in the whole county; and so litigious, that he had maintained above thirty lawsuits, in eight-and-twenty of which he had been condemned in costs. He said the others might be easily influenced in the way of admonition; but there

was no way of dealing with Prickle, except by the form and authority of the law. He therefore proposed to hear evidence in a judicial capacity, and his clerk being in attendance, the court was immediately opened in the knight's apartment.

By this time Mr. Clarke had made such good use of his time in explaining the law to his audience, and displaying the great wealth and unbounded liberality of Sir Launcelot Greaves, that he had actually brought over to his sentiments the constable and the commonalty, tag-rag, and bob-tail, and even staggered the majority of the farmers, who, at first, had breathed nothing but defiance and revenge. Farmer Stake being first called to the bar, and sworn touching the identity of Sir Launcelot Greaves and Captain Crowe, declared, that the said Crowe had stopped him on the king's highway, and put him in bodily fear; that he afterwards saw the said Crowe with a pole or weapon, value threepence, breaking the king's peace, by committing assault and battery against the heads and shoulders of his majesty's liege subjects, Geoffrey Prickle, Hodge Dolt, Richard Bumpkin, Mary Fang, Catherine Rubble, and Margery Litter; and that he saw Sir Launcelot Greaves, Baronet, aiding, assisting, and comforting the said Crowe, contrary to the king's peace, and against the form of the statute.

Being asked if the defendant, when he stopped them, demanded their money, or threatened violence, he answered he could not say, inasmuch as the defendant spoke in an unknown language. Being interrogated if the defendant did not allow them to

pass without using any violence, and if they did not pass unmolested, the deponent replied in the affirmative. Being required to tell for what reason they returned, and if the defendant Crowe was not assaulted before he began to use his weapon, the deponent made no answer. The depositions of farmer Bumpkin and Muggins, as well as of Madge Litter and Mary Fang, were taken to much the same purpose; and his worship earnestly exhorted them to an accommodation, observing, that they themselves were in fact the aggressors, and that Captain Crowe had done no more than exerted himself in his own defence.

They were all pretty well disposed to follow his advice, except farmer Prickle, who, entering the court with a bloody handkerchief about his head, declared that the law should determine it at next 'size; and in the meantime insisted that the defendants should find immediate bail, or go to prison, or be set in the stocks. He affirmed that they had been guilty of an *affray*, in appearing with armour and weapons not usually worn, to the terror of others, which is in itself a breach of the peace; but that they had, moreover, with force of arms, that is to say, with swords, staves, and other warlike instruments, by turns, made an assault and *affray*, to the terror and disturbance of him and divers subjects of our lord the King, then and there being, and to the evil and pernicious example of the liege people of the said lord the King, and against the peace of our said lord the King, his crown and dignity.

The peasant had purchased a few law terms at a considerable expense, and he thought he had a right

to turn his knowledge to the annoyance of all his neighbours. Mr. Elmy, finding him obstinately deaf to all proposals of accommodation, held the defendants to very moderate bail, the landlord and the curate of the parish freely offering themselves as sureties. Mr. Clarke, with Timothy Crabshaw, against whom nothing appeared, were now set at liberty; when the former, advancing to his worship, gave information against Geoffrey Prickle, and declared upon oath that he had seen him assault Captain Crowe without any provocation; and when he, the deponent, interposed to prevent further mischief, the said Prickle had likewise assaulted and wounded him, the deponent, and detained him for some time in false imprisonment, without warrant or authority.

In consequence of this information, which was corroborated by divers evidences, selected from the mob at the gate, the tables were turned upon farmer Prickle, who was given to understand, that he must either find bail, or be forthwith imprisoned. This *honest* boor, who was in opulent circumstances, had made such popular use of the benefits he possessed, that there was not a housekeeper in the parish who would not have rejoiced to see him hanged. His dealings and connexions, however, were such, that none of the other four would have refused to bail him, had not Clarke given them to understand that, if they did, he would make them all principals and parties, and have two separate actions against each. Prickle happened to be at variance with the innkeeper, and the curate durst not disoblige the

vicar, who at that very time was suing the farmer for the small tithes. He offered to deposit a sum equal to the recognisance of the knight's bail; but this was rejected, as an expedient contrary to the practice of the courts. He sent for the attorney of the village, to whom he had been a good customer; but the lawyer was hunting evidence in another county. The exciseman presented himself as a surety; but he not being an housekeeper, was not accepted. Divers cottagers, who depended on farmer Prickle, were successively refused, because they could not prove that they had paid scot and lot, and parish taxes.

The farmer, finding himself thus forlorn, and in imminent danger of visiting the inside of a prison, was seized with a paroxysm of rage, during which he inveighed against the bench, reviled the two adventurers errant, declared that he believed, and would lay a wager of twenty guineas, that he had more money in his pocket than e'er a man in the company; and in the space of a quarter of an hour swore forty oaths, which the justice did not fail to number. "Before we proceed to other matters," said Mr. Elmy, "I order you to pay forty shillings for the oaths you have sworn, otherwise I will cause you to be set in the stocks without further ceremony."

Prickle, throwing down a couple of guineas, with two execrations more to make up the sum, declared that he could afford to pay for swearing as well as e'er a justice in the county, and repeated his challenge of the wager, which our adventurer now accepted, protesting, at the same time, that it was

not a step taken from any motive of pride, but entirely with a view to punish an insolent plebeian, who could not otherwise be chastised without a breach of the peace. Twenty guineas being deposited on each side in the hands of Mr. Elmy, Prickle, with equal confidence and despatch, produced a canvas bag, containing two hundred and seventy pounds, which, being spread upon the table, made a very formidable show, that dazzled the eyes of the beholders, and induced many of them to believe he had ensured his conquest.

Our adventurer, asking if he had anything further to offer, and being answered in the negative, drew forth, with great deliberation, a pocket-book, in which there was a considerable parcel of bank-notes, from which he selected three of one hundred pounds each, and exhibited them upon the table, to the astonishment of all present. Prickle, mad with his overthrow and loss, said, it might be necessary to make him prove the notes were honestly come by; and Sir Launcelot started up, in order to take vengeance upon him for this insult, but was withheld by the arms and remonstrances of Mr. Elmy, who assured him that Prickle desired nothing so much as another broken head, to lay the foundation of a new prosecution.

The knight, calmed by this interposition, turned to the audience, saying, with the most affable deportment, "Good people, do not imagine that I intend to pocket the spoils of such a contemptible rascal. I shall beg the favour of this worthy gentleman to take up these twenty guineas, and distribute them as

he shall think proper among the poor of the parish; but, by this benefaction, I do not hold myself acquitted for the share I had in the bruises some of you have received in this unlucky fray, and therefore I give the other twenty guineas to be divided among the sufferers, to each according to the damage he or she shall appear to have sustained; and I shall consider it as an additional obligation, if Mr. Elmy will likewise superintend this retribution."

At the close of this address, the whole yard and gateway rung with acclamation, while honest Crowe, whose generosity was not inferior even to that of the accomplished Greaves, pulled out his purse, and declared, that, as he had begun the engagement, he would at least go share and share alike in new caulking their seams, and repairing their timbers. The knight, rather than enter into a dispute with his novice, told him he considered the twenty guineas as given by them both in conjunction, and that they would confer together on that subject hereafter.

This point being adjusted, Mr. Elmy assumed all the solemnity of the magistrate, and addressed himself to Prickle in these words: "Farmer Prickle, I am both sorry and ashamed to see a man of your years and circumstances so little respected, that you cannot find sufficient bail for forty pounds; a sure testimony that you have neither cultivated the friendship, nor deserved the goodwill of your neighbours. I have heard of your quarrels and your riots, your insolence and litigious disposition, and often wished for an opportunity of giving you a proper taste of

the law's correction. That opportunity now offers; you have, in the hearing of all these people, poured forth a torrent of abuse against me, both in the character of a gentleman and of a magistrate. Your abusing me personally perhaps I should have overlooked with the contempt it deserves, but I should ill vindicate the dignity of my office as a magistrate, by suffering you to insult the bench with impunity. I shall therefore imprison you for contempt, and you shall remain in jail until you can find bail on the other prosecutions."

Prickle, the first transports of his anger having subsided, began to be pricked with the thorns of compunction; he was indeed extremely mortified at the prospect of being sent to jail so disgracefully. His countenance fell; and, after a hard internal struggle, while the clerk was employed in writing the mittimus, he said he hoped his worship would not send him to prison. He begged pardon of him, and our adventurers, for having abused them in his passion; and observed, that, as he had received a broken head, and paid two-and-twenty guineas for his folly, he could not be said to have escaped altogether without punishment, even if the plaintiff should agree to exchange releases.

Sir Launcelot, seeing this stubborn rustic effectually humbled, became an advocate in his favour with Mr. Elmy, and Tom Clarke, who forgave him at his request; and a mutual release being executed, the farmer was permitted to depart. The populace were regaled at our adventurer's expense; and the men, women, and children, who had been wounded or

bruised in the battle, to the number of ten or a dozen, were desired to wait upon Mr. Elmy in the morning, to receive the knight's bounty. The justice was prevailed upon to spend the evening with Sir Launcelot and his two companions, for whom supper was bespoke; but the first thing the cook prepared was a poultice for Crowe's head, which was now enlarged to a monstrous exhibition. Our knight, who was all kindness and complacency, shook Mr. Clarke by the hand, expressing his satisfaction at meeting with his old friends again; and told him softly, that he had compliments for him from Mrs. Dolly Cowslip, who now lived with his Aurelia.

Clarke was confounded at this intelligence, and, after some hesitation, "Lord bless my soul!" cried he, "I'll be shot, then, if the pretended Miss Meadows wa'n't the same as Miss Darnel!" He then declared himself extremely glad that poor Dolly had got into such an agreeable situation, passed many warm encomiums on her goodness of heart and virtuous inclinations, and concluded with appealing to the knight, whether she did not look very pretty in her green joseph. In the meantime, he procured a plaster for his own head, and helped to apply the poultice to that of his uncle, who was sent to bed betimes with a moderate dose of sack-whey, to promote perspiration. The other three passed the evening to their mutual satisfaction; and the justice, in particular, grew enamoured of the knight's character, dashed as it was with extravagance.

Let us now leave them to the enjoyment of a sober and rational conversation, and give some account of

other guests, who arrived late in the evening, and here fixed their night quarters. But as we have already trespassed on the reader's patience, we shall give him a short respite, until the next chapter makes its appearance.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

IN WHICH THE RAYS OF CHIVALRY SHINE WITH RENOVATED LUSTRE.

OUR hero little dreamed that he had a formidable rival in the person of the knight, who arrived about eleven, at the sign of the St. George, and, by the noise he made, gave intimation of his importance. This was no other than Squire Sycamore, who, having received advice that Miss Aurelia Darnel had eloped from the place of her retreat, immediately took the field in quest of that lovely fugitive; hoping that, should he have the good fortune to find her in present distress, his good offices would not be rejected. He had followed the chase so close, that, immediately after our adventurer's departure, he alighted at the inn, from whence Aurelia had been conveyed; and there he learned the particulars which we have related above.

Mr. Sycamore had a great deal of the childish romantic in his disposition, and, in the course of his amours, is said to have always taken more pleasure in the pursuit than in the final possession. He had heard of Sir Launcelot's extravagance, by which he was in some measure infected, and he dropped an insinuation, that he could eclipse his rival, even in his own

lunatic sphere. This hint was not lost upon his companion, counsellor, and buffoon, the facetious Davy Dawdle, who had some humour, and a great deal of mischief, in his composition. He looked upon his patron as a fool, and his patron knew him to be both knave and fool; yet, the two characters suited each other so well, that they could hardly exist asunder. Davy was an artful sycophant, but he did not flatter in the usual way; on the contrary, he behaved *en cavalier*, and treated Sycamore, on whose bounty he subsisted, with the most sarcastic familiarity. Nevertheless, he seasoned his freedom with certain qualifying ingredients, that subdued the bitterness of it, and was now become so necessary to the squire, that he had no idea of enjoyment with which Dawdle was not somehow or other connected.

There had been a warm dispute betwixt them about the scheme of contesting the prize with Sir Launcelot in the lists of chivalry. Sycamore had insinuated, that if he had a mind to play the fool, he could wear armour, wield a lance, and manage a charger, as well as Sir Launcelot Greaves. Dawdle, snatching the hint, "I had, some time ago," said he, "contrived a scheme for you, which I was afraid you had not address enough to execute. It would be no difficult matter, in imitation of the bachelor, Sampson Carrasco, to go in quest of Greaves, as a knight-errant, defy him as a rival, and establish a compact, by which the vanquished should obey the injunctions of the victor." — "That is my very idea," cried Sycamore. — "Your idea!" replied the other; "had you ever an idea of your own conception?" Thus the

own house, accompanied by Dawdle, who undertook to perform the part of his squire at the approaching combat. He was also attended by a servant on horseback, who had charge of the armour, and another who blowed the trumpet. They no sooner understood that our hero was housed at the George, than the trumpeter sounded a charge, which alarmed Sir Launcelot and his company, and disturbed honest Captain Crowe in the middle of his first sleep. Their next step was to pen a challenge, which, when the stranger departed, was by the trumpeter delivered with great ceremony into the hands of Sir Launcelot, who read it in these words: — "To the knight of the Crescent, greeting. Whereas I am informed you have the presumption to lay claim to the heart of the peerless Aurelia Darnel, I give you notice that I can admit no rivalship in the affection of that paragon of beauty; and I expect that you will either resign your pretensions, or make it appear in single combat, according to the law of arms and the institutions of chivalry, that you are worthy to dispute her favour with him of the Griffin. — POLYDORE."

Our adventurer was not a little surprised at this address, which however he pocketed in silence, and began to reflect, not without mortification, that he was treated as a lunatic by some person, who wanted to amuse himself with the infirmities of his fellow-creatures. Mr. Thomas Clarke, who saw the ceremony with which the letter was delivered, and the emotions with which it was read, hied him to the kitchen for intelligence, and there learned that the stranger was Squire Sycamore. He forthwith comprehended

the nature of the billet, and, in the apprehension that bloodshed would ensue, resolved to alarm his uncle, that he might assist in keeping the peace. He accordingly entered the apartment of the captain, who had been waked by the trumpet, and now peevishly asked the meaning of that d—ned piping, as if all hands were called upon deck? Clarke having imparted what he knew of the transaction, together with his own conjectures, the captain said, he did not suppose as how they would engage by candle-light; and that, for his own part, he should turn out in the larboard watch, long enough before any signals could be hove out for forming the line.

With this assurance the lawyer retired to his nest, where he did not fail to dream of Mrs. Dolly Cowslip, while Sir Launcelot passed the night awake, in ruminating on the strange challenge he had received. He had got notice that the sender was Mr. Sycamore, and hesitated with himself whether he should not punish him for his impertinence; but when he reflected on the nature of the dispute, and the serious consequences it might produce, he resolved to decline the combat, as a trial of right and merit founded upon absurdity. Even in his maddest hours, he never adopted those maxims of knight-errantry which related to challenges. He always perceived the folly and wickedness of defying a man to mortal fight, because he did not like the colour of his beard, or the complexion of his mistress; or of deciding by homicide whether he or his rival deserved the preference, when it was the lady's prerogative to determine which should be the happy lover. It was his opinion that

more in his night-gown and slippers. Disturbed by Crowe's first salute, he sprung up, and now expressed no small astonishment at first sight of the novice's countenance. After having gazed alternately at him and Dawdle, "Who have we got here?" said he; "raw head and bloody bones?" When his friend, slipping on his clothes, gave him to understand that this was a friend of Sir Launcelot Greaves, and explained the purport of his errand, he treated him with more civility. He assured him that he should have the pleasure to break a spear with Mr. Dawdle; and signified his surprise that Sir Launcelot had made no answer to his letter. It being by this time clear daylight, and Crowe extremely interested in this affair, he broke without ceremony into the knight's chamber, and told him abruptly that the enemy had brought to, and waited for his coming up, in order to begin the action. "I 've hailed his consort," said he, "a shambling, chattering fellow. He took me first for a hobgoblin, then called me names, a tiger, a wrynoseo'ross, and a Persian bear; but egad, if I come athwart him, I 'll make him look like the bear and ragged staff before we part, — I wool."

This intimation was not received with that alacrity which the captain expected to find in our adventurer, who told him in a peremptory tone, that he had no design to come to action, and desired to be left to his repose. Crowe forthwith retired crestfallen, and muttered something, which was never distinctly heard.

About eight in the morning Mr. Dawdle brought

him a formal message from the knight of the Griffin, desiring he would appoint the lists, and give security of the field. To which request he made answer in a very composed and solemn accent, "If the person who sent you thinks I have injured him, let him without disguise or any such ridiculous ceremony, explain the nature of the wrong; and then I shall give such satisfaction as may suit my conscience and my character. If he hath bestowed his affection upon any particular object, and looks upon me as a favourite rival, I shall not wrong the lady so much as to take any step that may prejudice her choice, especially a step that contradicts my own reason as much as it would outrage the laws of my country. If he who calls himself knight of the Griffin is really desirous of treading in the paths of true chivalry, he will not want opportunities of signalising his valour in the cause of virtue. — Should he, notwithstanding this declaration, offer violence to me in the course of my occasions, he will always find me in a posture of defence. Or, should he persist in repeating his importunities, I shall without ceremony chastise the messenger." His declining the combat was interpreted into fear by Mr. Sycamore, who now became more insolent and ferocious, on the supposition of our knight's timidity. Sir Launcelot meanwhile went to breakfast with his friends, and, having put on his armour, ordered the horses to be brought forth. Then he paid the bill, and walking deliberately to the gate, in presence of Squire Sycamore and his attendants, vaulted at one spring into the saddle of Bronzomarte, whose neighing and curveting pro-

claimed the joy he felt in being mounted by his accomplished master.

Though the knight of the Griffin did not think proper to insult his rival personally, his friend Dawdle did not fail to crack some jokes on the figure and horsemanship of Crowe, who again declared he should be glad to fall in with him upon the voyage. Nor did Mr. Clarke's black patch and rueful countenance pass unnoticed and unridiculed. As for Timothy Crabshaw, he beheld his brother squire with the contempt of a veteran; and Gilbert paid him his compliments with his heels at parting. But when our adventurer and his retinue were clear of the inn, Mr. Sycamore ordered his trumpeter to sound a retreat, by way of triumph over his antagonist.

Perhaps he would have contented himself with this kind of victory, had not Dawdle further inflamed his envy and ambition, by launching out in praise of Sir Launcelot. He observed that his countenance was open and manly; his joints strong knit, and his form unexceptionable; that he trod like Hercules, and vaulted into the saddle like a winged Mercury. Nay, he even hinted it was lucky for Sycamore that the knight of the Crescent happened to be so pacifically disposed. His patron sickened at these praises, and took fire at the last observation. He affected to undervalue personal beauty, though the opinion of the world had been favourable to himself in that particular. He said he was at least two inches taller than Greaves; and as to shape and air, he would make no comparisons; but with respect to riding, he was sure he had a better seat than Sir

Launcelot, and would wager five hundred to fifty guineas, that he would unhorse him at the first encounter. "There is no occasion for laying wagers," replied Mr. Dawdle; "the doubt may be determined in half an hour — Sir Launcelot is not a man to avoid you at full gallop." Sycamore, after some hesitation, declared he would follow and provoke him to battle, on condition that Dawdle would engage Crowe; and this condition was accepted. For, though Davy had no stomach to the trial, he could not readily find an excuse for declining it. Besides, he had discovered the captain to be a very bad horseman, and resolved to eke out his own scanty valour with a border of ingenuity. The servants were immediately ordered to unpack the armour, and, in a little time, Mr. Sycamore made a very formidable appearance. But the scene that followed is too important to be huddled in at the end of a chapter; and therefore we shall reserve it for a more conspicuous place in these memoirs.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

CONTAINING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE GRIFFIN AND CRESCENT.

MR. SYCAMORE, alias the knight of the Griffin, so denominated from a griffin painted on his shield, being armed at all points, and his friend Dawdle provided with a certain implement, which he flattered himself would ensure a victory over the novice Crowe, they set out from the George, with their attendants, in all the elevation of hope, and pranced along the highway that led towards London, that being the road which our adventurer pursued. As they were extremely well mounted, and proceeded at a round pace, they, in less than two hours, came up with Sir Launcelot and his company; and Sycamore sent another formal defiance to the knight by his trumpeter, Dawdle having, for good reasons, declined that office.

Our adventurer hearing himself thus addressed, and seeing his rival, who had passed him, posted to obstruct his progress, armed cap-à-pee, with his lance in the rest, determined to give the satisfaction that was required, and desired that the regulations of the combat might be established. The knight of the Griffin proposed, that the vanquished party should

resign all pretensions to Miss Aurelia Darnel, in favour of the victor; that, while the principals were engaged, his friend Dawdle should run a tilt with Captain Crowe; that Squire Crabshaw and Mr. Sycamore's servant should keep themselves in readiness to assist their respective masters occasionally, according to the law of arms; and that Mr. Clarke should observe the motions of the trumpeter, whose province was to sound the charge to battle.

Our knight agreed to these regulations, notwithstanding the earnest and pathetic remonstrances of the young lawyer, who, with tears in his eyes, conjured all the combatants, in their turns, to refrain from an action that might be attended with bloodshed and murder; and was contrary to the laws both of God and man. In vain he endeavoured to move them by tears and entreaties, by threatening them with prosecutions in this world, and pains and penalties in the next. They persisted in their resolution, and his uncle would have begun hostilities on his carcase, had he not been prevented by Sir Launcelot, who exhorted Clarke to retire from the field, that he might not be involved in the consequences of the combat. He relished this advice so well, that he had actually moved off to some distance; but his apprehensions and concern for his friends co-operating with an insatiable curiosity, detained him in sight of the engagement.

The two knights having fairly divided the ground, and the same precautions being taken by the seconds on another part of the field, Sycamore began to be invaded with some scruples, which were probably

engendered by the martial appearance and well-known character of his antagonist. The confidence which he derived from the reluctance of Sir Launcelot now vanished, because it plainly appeared, that the knight's backwardness was not owing to personal timidity; and he foresaw that the prosecution of this joke might be attended with very serious consequences to his own life and reputation. He therefore desired a parley, in which he observed his affection for Miss Darnel was of such a delicate nature, that, should the discomfiture of his rival contribute to make her unhappy, his victory must render him the most miserable wretch upon earth. He proposed, therefore, that her sentiments and choice should be ascertained before they proceeded to extremity.

Sir Launcelot declared that he was much more afraid of combating Aurelia's inclination, than of opposing the knight of the Griffin in arms; and that if he had the least reason to think Mr. Sycamore, or any other person, was distinguished by her preference, he would instantly give up his suit as desperate. At the same time, he observed, that Sycamore had proceeded too far to retract; that he had insulted a gentleman, and not only challenged, but even pursued him, and blocked up his passage in the public highway; outrages which he (Sir Launcelot) would not suffer to pass unpunished. Accordingly, he insisted on the combat, on pain of treating Sycamore as a craven, and a recreant. This declaration was reinforced by Dawdle, who told him, that, should he now decline the engagement, all the world would look upon him as an infamous poltroon.

These two observations gave a necessary fillip to the courage of the challenger. The parties took their stations. The trumpet sounded to charge, and the combatants began their career with great impetuosity. — Whether the gleam of Sir Launcelot's arms affrighted Mr. Sycamore's steed, or some other object had an unlucky effect on his eyesight, certain it is he started at about midway, and gave his rider such a violent shake as discomposed his attitude, and disabled him from using his lance to the best advantage. Had our hero continued his career, with his lance couched, in all probability Sycamore's armour would have proved but a bad defence to his carcase; but Sir Launcelot perceiving his rival's spear unrested, had just time to throw up the point of his own, when the two horses closed with such a shock, that Sycamore, already wavering in the saddle, was overthrown, and his armour crashed around him as he fell.

The victor, seeing him lie without motion, alighted immediately and began to unbuckle his helmet, in which office he was assisted by the trumpeter. When the headpiece was removed, the hapless knight of the Griffin appeared in the pale livery of death, though he was only in a swoon, from which he soon recovered by the effect of the fresh air, and the aspersion of cold water, brought from a small pool in the neighbourhood. When he recognised his conqueror doing the offices of humanity about his person, he closed his eyes from vexation, told Sir Launcelot that his was the fortune of the day, though he himself owed his mischance to the fault of his own horse; and

observed, that this ridiculous affair would not have happened, but for the mischievous instigation of that scoundrel Dawdle, on whose ribs he threatened to revenge this mishap.

Perhaps Captain Crowe might have saved him the trouble, had the wag honourably adhered to the institutions of chivalry, in his conflict with our novice. But on this occasion, his ingenuity was more commendable than his courage. He had provided at the inn a blown bladder, in which several smooth pebbles were enclosed; and this he slyly fixed on the head of his pole, when the captain obeyed the signal of battle. Instead of bearing the brunt of the encounter, he turned out of the straight line, so as to avoid the lance of his antagonist, and rattled his bladder with such effect, that Crowe's horse, pricking up his ears, took to his heels, and fled across some ploughed land with such precipitation, that the rider was obliged to quit his spear, and lay fast hold on the mane, that he might not be thrown out of the saddle. Dawdle, who was much better mounted, seeing his condition, rode up to the unfortunate novice, and belaboured his shoulders without fear of retaliation.

Mr. Clarke, seeing his kinsman so roughly handled, forgot his fears, and flew to his assistance; but, before he came up, the aggressor had retired; and now perceiving that fortune had declared against his friend and patron, very honourably abandoned him in his distress, and went off at full speed for London.

Nor was Timothy Crabshaw without his share in

the noble achievements of this propitious day. He had by this time imbibed such a tincture of errantry, that he firmly believed himself and his master equally invincible; and this belief operating upon a perverse disposition, rendered him as quarrelsome in his sphere, as his master was mild and forbearing. As he sat on horseback, in the place assigned to him and Sycamore's lacquey, he managed Gilbert in such a manner, as to invade with his heels the posteriors of the other's horse; and this insult produced some altercation which ended in mutual assault. The footman handled the butt-end of his horsewhip with great dexterity about the head of Crabshaw, who declared afterwards, that it sung and simmered like a kettle of cod-fish; but the squire, who understood the nature of long lashes, as having been a carter from his infancy, found means to twine his thong about the neck of his antagonist, and pull him off his horse half strangled, at the very instant his master was thrown by Sir Launcelot Greaves.

Having thus obtained the victory, he did not much regard the punctilios of chivalry; but, taking it for granted he had a right to make the most of his advantage, resolved to carry off the *spolia opima*. Alighting with great agility, "Brother," cried he, "I think as haw yawrs bean't a butcher's horse, a doan't carry calves well — I'se make yaw knaw your churning days, I wool — what, yaw look as if yaw was crow-trodden, you do — now, you shall pay the score you have been running on my pate, you shall, brother."

So saying, he rifled his pockets, stripped him of

his hat and coat, and took possession of his master's portmanteau. But he did not long enjoy his plunder. For the lacquey complaining to Sir Launcelot of his having been despoiled, the knight commanded his squire to refund, not without menaces of subjecting him to the severest chastisement for his injustice and rapacity. Timothy represented, with great vehemence, that he had won the spoils in fair battle, at the expense of his head and shoulders, which he immediately uncovered, to prove his allegation. But his remonstrance having no effect upon his master, "Wounds!" cried he, "an I mun gee thee back the pig, I'se gee thee back the poke also; I'm a drubbing still in thy debt."

With these words, he made a most furious attack upon the plaintiff with his horsewhip, and, before the knight could interpose, repaid the lacquey with interest. As an appurtenance to Sycamore and Dawdle, he ran the risk of another assault from the novice Crowe, who was so transported with rage at the disagreeable trick which had been played upon him by his fugitive antagonist, that he could not for some time pronounce an articulate sound, but a few broken interjections, the meaning of which could not be ascertained. Snatching up his pole, he ran towards the place where Mr. Sycamore sat on the grass, supported by the trumpeter, and would have finished what our adventurer had left undone, if the knight of the Crescent, with admirable dexterity, had not warded off the blow which he aimed at the knight of the Griffin, and signified his displeasure in a resolute tone. Then he collared the lacquey, who

was just disengaged from the chastising hand of Crabshaw, and swinging his lance with his other hand, encountered the squire's ribs by accident.

Timothy was not slow in returning the salutation with the weapon which he still wielded. Mr. Clarke running up to the assistance of his uncle, was opposed by the lacquey, who seemed extremely desirous of seeing the enemy revenge his quarrel, by falling foul of one another. Clarke, thus impeded, commenced hostilities against the footman, while Crowe grappled with Crabshaw; a battle-royal ensued, and was maintained with great vigour, and some bloodshed on all sides, until the authority of Sir Launcelot, reinforced by some weighty remonstrances applied to the squire, put an end to the conflict. Crabshaw immediately desisted, and ran roaring to communicate his grievances to Gilbert, who seemed to sympathise very little with his distress. The lacquey took to his heels; Mr. Clarke wiped his bloody nose, declaring he had a good mind to put the aggressor in the Crown-office; and Captain Crowe continued to ejaculate unconnected oaths; which, however, seemed to imply that he was almost sick of his new profession. "D—n my eyes, if you call this — start my timbers, brother — look ye, d'ye see — a lousy, lubberly, cowardly son of a — among the breakers, d'ye see — lost my steerage way — split my binnacle; hawl away — O! d—n all arrantry — give me a tight vessel, d'ye see, brother — mayhap you may n't — snatch my — sea-room and a spanking gale — odds heart, I 'll hold a whole year's — smite my limbs; it don't signify talking."

Our hero consoled the novice for his disaster, by observing that if he had got some blows he had lost no honour. At the same time he observed, that it was very difficult, if not impossible, for a man to succeed in the paths of chivalry, who had passed the better part of his days in other occupations; and hinted that, as the cause which had engaged him in this way of life no longer existed, he was determined to relinquish a profession which, in a peculiar manner, exposed him to the most disagreeable incidents. Crowe chewed the cud upon this insinuation, while the other personages of the drama were employed in catching the horses, which had given their riders the slip. As for Mr. Sycamore, he was so bruised by his fall, that it was necessary to procure a litter for conveying him to the next town, and the servant was despatched for this convenience, Sir Launcelot staying with him until it arrived.

When he was safely deposited in the carriage, our hero took leave of him in these terms: "I shall not insist upon your submitting to the terms you yourself proposed before this rencontre. I give you free leave to use all your advantages, in an honourable way, for promoting your suit with the young lady of whom you profess yourself enamoured. Should you have recourse to sinister practices, you will find Sir Launcelot Greaves ready to demand an account of your conduct, not in the character of a lunatic knight-errant, but as a plain English gentleman, jealous of his honour, and resolute in his purpose."

To this address Mr. Sycamore made no reply, but

with a sullen aspect ordered the carriage to proceed; and it moved accordingly to the right, our hero's road to London lying in the other direction.

Sir Launcelot had already exchanged his armour for a riding-coat, hat, and boots; and Crowe, parting with his skull-cap and leathern jerkin, regained, in some respects, the appearance of a human creature. Thus metamorphosed, they pursued their way in an easy pace, Mr. Clarke endeavouring to amuse them with a learned dissertation on the law, tending to demonstrate that Mr. Sycamore was, by his behaviour on that day, liable to three different actions, besides a commission of lunacy; and that Dawdle might be prosecuted for having practised subtle craft to the annoyance of his uncle, over and above an action for assault and battery; because, for why? The said Crowe having run away, as might be easily proved, before any blows were given, the said Dawdle, by pursuing him even out of the high-road, putting him in fear, and committing battery on his body, became to all intents and purposes the aggressor; and an indictment would lie in *Banco Regis.*

The captain's pride was so shocked at these observations, that he exclaimed with equal rage and impatience, "You lie, you dog, in *Bilcum Regis* — you lie, I say, you lubber, I did not run away; nor was I in fear, d' ye see. It was my son of a bitch of a horse that would not obey the helm, d' ye see, whereby I cou'd n't use my metal, d' ye see. As for the matter of fear, you and fear may kiss my — So don't go and heave your stink-pots at my character,

d'ye see, or — agad I'll trim thee fore and aft with a — I wool." Tom protested he meant nothing but a little speculation, and Crowe was appeased.

In the evening they reached the town of Bugden without any farther adventure, and passed the night in great tranquillity.

Next morning, even after the horses were ordered to be saddled, Mr. Clarke, without ceremony, entered the apartment of Sir Launcelot, leading in a female, who proved to be the identical Mrs. Dolly Cowslip. This young woman, advancing to the knight, cried, "O Sir Launcelot! my dear leady, my dear leady!" — but was hindered from proceeding by a flood of tears, which the tender-hearted lawyer mingled with a plentiful shower of sympathy.

Our adventurer starting at this exclamation, "O heavens!" cried he, "where is my Aurelia? speak, where did you leave that jewel of my soul? answer me in a moment — I am all terror and impatience!"

Dolly, having recollected herself, told him that Mr. Darnel had lodged his niece in the new buildings by May Fair; that, on the second night after their arrival, a very warm expostulation had passed between Aurelia and her uncle, who next morning dismissed Dolly, without permitting her to take leave of her mistress, and that same day moved to another part of the town, as she afterwards learned of the landlady, though she could not inform her whither they were gone. That, when she was turned away, John Clump, one of the footmen, who pretended to have a kindness for her, had faithfully promised to call upon her, and let her know what

passed in the family; but as he did not keep his word, and she was an utter stranger in London, without friends or settlement, she had resolved to return to her mother, and travelled so far on foot since yesterday morning.

Our knight, who had expected the most dismal tidings from her lamentable preamble, was pleased to find his presaging fears disappointed; though he was far from being satisfied with the dismission of Dolly, from whose attachment to his interest, joined to her influence over Mr. Clump, he had hoped to reap such intelligence as would guide him to the haven of his desires. After a minute's reflection, he saw it would be expedient to carry back Mrs. Cowslip, and lodge her at the place where Mr. Clump had promised to visit her with intelligence; for, in all probability, it was not for want of inclination that he had not kept his promise.

Dolly did not express any aversion to the scheme of returning to London, where she hoped once more to rejoin her dear lady, to whom by this time she was attached by the strongest ties of affection; and her inclination in this respect was assisted by the consideration of having the company of the young lawyer, who, it plainly appeared, had made strange havoc in her heart, though it must be owned, for the honour of this blooming damsel, that her thoughts had never once deviated from the paths of innocence and virtue. The more Sir Launcelot surveyed this agreeable maiden, the more he felt himself disposed to take care of her fortune; and from this day he began to ruminate on a scheme which was afterwards

consummated in her favour. In the meantime he laid injunctions on Mr. Clarke to conduct his addresses to Mrs. Cowslip according to the rules of honour and decorum, as he valued his countenance and friendship. His next step was to procure a saddle-horse for Dolly, who preferred this to any other sort of carriage, and thereby gratified the wish of her admirer, who longed to see her on horseback in her green joseph.

The armour, including the accoutrements of the novice and the squire, were left in the care of the inn-keeper, and Timothy Crabshaw was so metamorphosed by a plain livery-frock, that even Gilbert with difficulty recognised his person. As for the novice Crowe, his head had almost resumed its natural dimensions, but then his whole face was so covered with a livid suffusion, his nose appeared so flat, and his lips so tumefied, that he might very well have passed for a Caffre or Ethiopian. Every circumstance being now adjusted, they departed from Bugden in a regular cavalcade, dined at Hatfield, and in the evening arrived at the Bull and Gate Inn in Holborn, where they established their quarters for the night.

CHAPTER TWENTY

IN WHICH OUR HERO DESCENDS INTO THE MANSIONS OF THE DAMNED.

THE first step which Sir Launcelot took in the morning that succeeded his arrival in London was to settle Mrs. Dolly Cowslip in lodgings at the house where John Clump had promised to visit her; as he did not doubt, that, though the visit was delayed, it would some time or other be performed, and in that case he might obtain some intelligence of Aurelia. Mr. Thomas Clarke was permitted to take up his habitation in the same house, on his earnestly desiring he might be intrusted with the office of conveying information and instruction between Dolly and our adventurer. The knight himself resolved to live retired, until he should receive some tidings relating to Miss Darnel that should influence his conduct; but he proposed to frequent places of public resort incognito, that he might have some chance of meeting by accident with the mistress of his heart.

Taking it for granted, that the oddities of Crowe would help to amuse him in his hours of solitude and disappointment, he invited that original to be his guest at a small house, which he determined to hire ready furnished, in the neighbourhood of Golden

Square. The captain thanked him for his courtesy, and frankly embraced his offer, though he did not much approve of the knight's choice in point of situation. He said he would recommend him to a special good upper deck hard by St. Catherine's in Wapping, where he would be delighted with the prospect of the street forwards, well frequented by passengers, carts, drays, and other carriages; and having backwards an agreeable view of Alderman Parson's great brewhouse, with two hundred hogs feeding almost under the window. As a further inducement, he mentioned the vicinity of the Tower guns, which would regale his hearing on days of salutation; nor did he forget the sweet sound of mooring and unmooring ships in the river, and the pleasing objects on the other side of the Thames, displayed in the oozy docks and cabbage-gardens of Rotherhithe. Sir Launcelot was not insensible to the beauties of this landscape, but, his pursuit lying another way, he contented himself with a less enchanting situation, and Crowe accompanied him out of pure friendship.

At night, Mr. Clarke arrived at our hero's house with tidings that were by no means agreeable. He told him, that Clump had left a letter for Dolly, informing her, that his master, Squire Darnel, was to set out early in the morning for Yorkshire; but he could give no account of her lady, who had the day before been conveyed, he knew not whither, in a hackney-coach, attended by her uncle and an ill-looking fellow, who had much the appearance of a bailiff or turnkey, so that he feared she was in trouble.

Sir Launcelot was deeply affected by this intimation. His apprehension was even roused by a suspicion that a man of Darnel's violent temper and unprincipled heart might have practised upon the life of his lovely niece; but, upon recollection, he could not suppose that he had recourse to such infamous expedients, knowing as he did, that an account of her would be demanded at his hands, and that it would be easily proved he had conveyed her from the lodging in which she resided.

His first fears now gave way to another suggestion, that Anthony, in order to intimidate her into a compliance with his proposals, had trumped up a spurious claim against her, and, by virtue of a writ, confined her in some prison or spunging-house. Possessed with this idea, he desired Mr. Clarke to search the sheriff's office in the morning, that he might know whether any such writ had been granted; and he himself resolved to make a tour of the great prisons belonging to the metropolis, to inquire, if perchance she might not be confined under a borrowed name. Finally, he determined, if possible, to apprise her of his place of abode, by a paragraph in all the daily papers, signifying that Sir Launcelot Greaves had arrived at his house near Golden Square.

All these resolutions were punctually executed. No such writ had been taken out in the sheriff's office; and therefore our hero set out on his jail expedition, accompanied by Mr. Clarke, who had contracted some acquaintance with the commanding officers in these garrisons, in the course of his clerkship and practice as an attorney. The first day they spent in

prosecuting their inquiry through the Gate House, Fleet, and Marshalsea; the next day they allotted to the King's Bench, where they understood there was a great variety of prisoners. There they proposed to make a minute scrutiny, by the help of Mr. Norton, the deputy-marshal, who was Mr. Clarke's intimate friend, and had nothing at all of the jailor, either in his appearance or in his disposition, which was remarkably humane and benevolent towards all his fellow-creatures.

The knight having bespoke dinner at a tavern in the Borough, was, together with Captain Crowe, conducted to the prison of the King's Bench, which is situated in St. George's Fields, about a mile from the end of Westminster Bridge, and appears like a neat little regular town, consisting of one street, surrounded by a very high wall, including an open piece of ground, which may be termed a garden, where the prisoners take the air, and amuse themselves with a variety of diversions. Except the entrance, where the turnkeys keep watch and ward, there is nothing in the place that looks like a jail, or bears the least colour of restraint. The street is crowded with passengers. Tradesmen of all kinds here exercise their different professions. Hawkers of all sorts are admitted to call and vend their wares as in any open street of London. Here are butchers' stands, chandlers' shops, a surgery, a tap-house, well frequented, and a public kitchen, in which provisions are dressed for all the prisoners gratis, at the expense of the publican. Here the voice of misery never complains; and, indeed, little else is to be heard but the sounds of mirth and jollity.

At the farther end of the street, on the right hand, is a little paved court, leading to a separate building, consisting of twelve large apartments, called state rooms, well furnished and fitted up for the reception of the better sort of Crown prisoners; and, on the other side of the street, facing a separate division of ground, called the common side, is a range of rooms occupied by prisoners of the lowest order, who share the profits of a begging-box, and are maintained by this practice, and some established funds of charity. We ought also to observe, that the jail is provided with a neat chapel, in which a clergyman, in consideration of a certain salary, performs divine service every Sunday.

Our adventurer, having searched the books, and perused the description of all the female prisoners who had been for some weeks admitted into the jail, obtained not the least intelligence of his concealed charmer, but resolved to alleviate his disappointment by the gratification of his curiosity.

Under the auspices of Mr. Norton, he made a tour of the prison, and, in particular, visited the kitchen, where he saw a number of spits loaded with a variety of provision, consisting of butchers' meat, poultry, and game. He could not help expressing his astonishment, with uplifted hands, and congratulating himself in secret upon his being a member of that community which had provided such a comfortable asylum for the unfortunate. His ejaculation was interrupted by a tumultuous noise in the street; and Mr. Norton declaring he was sent for to the lodge, consigned our hero to the care of one Mr. Felton, a

prisoner of a very decent appearance, who paid his compliments with a good grace, and invited the company to repose themselves in his apartment, which was large, commodious, and well furnished. When Sir Launcelot asked the cause of that uproar, he told him that it was the prelude to a boxing-match between two of the prisoners, to be decided in the ground or garden of the place.

Captain Crowe, expressing an eager curiosity to see the battle, Mr. Felton assured him there would be no sport, as the combatants were both reckoned dunghills; "but, in half an hour," said he, "there will be a battle of some consequence between two of the demagogues of the place, Dr. Crabclaw and Mr. Tapley, the first a physician and the other a brewer. You must know, gentlemen, that this microcosm, or republic in miniature, is like the great world, split into factions. Crabclaw is the leader of one party, and the other is headed by Tapley; both are men of warm and impetuous tempers, and their intrigues have embroiled the whole place, insomuch that it was dangerous to walk the street on account of the continual skirmishes of their partisans. At length, some of the more sedate inhabitants having met and deliberated upon some remedy for these growing disorders, proposed that the dispute should be at once decided by single combat between the two chiefs, who readily agreed to the proposal. The match was accordingly made for five guineas, and this very day and hour appointed for the trial, on which considerable sums of money are depending. As for Mr. Norton, it is not proper that he should be present,

or seem to countenance such violent proceedings, which, however, it is necessary to connive at, as convenient vents for the evaporation of those humours, which, being confined, might accumulate and break out with greater fury in conspiracy and rebellion."

The knight owned he could not conceive by what means such a number of licentious people, amounting, with their dependants, to above five hundred, were restrained within the bounds of any tolerable discipline, or prevented from making their escape, which they might at any time accomplish, either by stealth or open violence; as it could not be supposed that one or two turnkeys, continually employed in opening and shutting the door, could resist the efforts of a whole multitude.

"Your wonder, good sir," said Mr. Felton, "will vanish, when you consider it is hardly possible that the multitude should co-operate in the execution of such a scheme; and that the keeper perfectly well understands the maxim *divide et impera*. Many prisoners are restrained by the dictates of gratitude towards the deputy-marshal, whose friendship and good offices they have experienced; some no doubt are actuated by motives of discretion. One party is an effectual check upon the other; and I am firmly persuaded that there are not ten prisoners within the place that would make their escape, if the doors were laid open. This is a step which no man would take, unless his fortune was altogether desperate; because it would oblige him to leave his country for life, and expose him to the most imminent risk of being retaken and treated with the utmost severity. The

majority of the prisoners live in the most lively hope of being released by the assistance of their friends, the compassion of their creditors, or the favour of the legislature. Some who are cut off from all these proposals are become naturalised to the place, knowing they cannot subsist in any other situation. I myself am one of these. After having resigned all my effects for the benefit of my creditors, I have been detained these nine years in prison, because one person refuses to sign my certificate. I have long outlived all my friends from whom I could expect the least countenance or favour. I am grown old in confinement, and lay my account with ending my days in jail, as the mercy of the legislature in favour of insolvent debtors is never extended to uncertified bankrupts taken in execution. By dint of industry and the most rigid economy, I make shift to live independent in this retreat. To this scene my faculty of subsisting, as well as my body, is peculiarly confined. Had I an opportunity to escape, where should I go? All my views of fortune have been long blasted. I have no friends nor connexions in the world. I must, therefore, starve in some sequestered corner, or be recaptivated and confined for ever to close prison, deprived of the indulgences which I now enjoy."

Here the conversation was broke off by another uproar, which was the signal to battle between the doctor and his antagonist. The company immediately adjourned to the field, where the combatants were already undressed, and the stakes deposited. The doctor seemed of the middle age and middle

stature, active and alert, with an atrabilarious aspect, and a mixture of rage and disdain expressed in his countenance. The brewer was large, raw-boned, and round as a butt of beer, but very fat, unwieldy, short-winded, and phlegmatic. Our adventurer was not a little surprised when he beheld, in the character of seconds, a male and female stripped naked from the waist upwards, the latter ranging on the side of the physician; but the commencement of the battle prevented his demanding of his guide an explanation of this phenomenon. The doctor retiring some paces backwards, threw himself into the attitude of a battering-ram, and rushed upon his antagonist with great impetuosity, foreseeing, that, should he have the good fortune to overturn him in the first assault, it would not be an easy task to raise him up again, and put him in a capacity of offence. But the momentum of Crabclaw's head, and the concomitant efforts of his knuckles, had no effect upon the ribs of Tapley, who stood firm as the Acroceraunian promontory; and stepping forward with his projected fist, something smaller and softer than a sledge-hammer, struck the physician to the ground.

In a trice, however, by the assistance of his female second, he was on his legs again, and grappling with his antagonist, endeavoured to tip him a fall, but instead of accomplishing his purpose, he received a cross-buttock, and the brewer throwing himself upon him as he fell, had well-nigh smothered him on the spot. The amazon flew to his assistance, and Tapley showing no inclination to get up, she smote him on the temple till he roared. The male second hasten-

ing to the relief of his principal, made application to the eyes of the female, which were immediately surrounded with black circles; and she returned the salute with a blow, which brought a double stream of blood from his nostrils, greeting him at the same time with the opprobrious appellation of a lousy son of a b—h. A combat more furious than the first would now have ensued, had not Felton interposed with an air of authority, and insisted on the man's leaving the field, an injunction which he forthwith obeyed, saying, "Well, damme, Felton, you 're my friend and commander; I 'll obey your order — but the b—h will be foul of me before we sleep." — Then Felton advancing to his opponent, "Madam," said he, "I 'm very sorry to see a lady of your rank and qualifications expose yourself in this manner — for God's sake, behave with a little more decorum, if not for the sake of your own family, at least for the credit of your sex in general." — "Hark ye, Felton," said she, "decorum is founded upon a delicacy of sentiment and deportment, which cannot consist with the disgraces of a jail, and the miseries of indigence. — But I see the dispute is now terminated, and the money is to be drank; if you 'll dine with us you shall be welcome; if not, you may die in your sobriety, and be d—ned."

By this time the doctor had given out, and allowed the brewer to be the better man; yet he would not honour the festival with his presence, but retired to his chamber, exceedingly mortified at his defeat. Our hero was reconducted to Mr. Felton's apartment, where he sat some time without opening his mouth,

so astonished he was at what he had seen and heard. "I perceive, sir," said the prisoner, "you are surprised at the manner in which I accosted that unhappy woman; and perhaps you will be more surprised when you hear that within these eighteen months she was actually a person of fashion, and her opponent, who by the bye is her husband, universally respected as a man of honour and a brave officer."— "I am, indeed," cried our hero, "overwhelmed with amazement and concern, as well as stimulated by an eager curiosity to know the fatal causes which have produced such a reverse of character and fortune. But I will rein my curiosity till the afternoon, if you will favour me with your company at a tavern in the neighbourhood, where I have bespoke dinner, a favour which I hope Mr. Norton will have no objection to your granting, as he himself is to be of the party."—The prisoner thanked him for his kind invitation, and they adjourned immediately to the place, taking up the deputy-marshal in their passage through the lodge or entrance of the prison.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

CONTAINING FURTHER ANECDOTES RELATING TO THE CHILDREN OF WRETCHEDNESS.

DINNER being cheerfully discussed, and our adventurer expressing an eager desire to know the history of the male and female who had acted as squires or seconds to the champions of the King's Bench, Felton gratified his curiosity to this effect: —

"All that I know of Captain Clewline, previous to his commitment, is, that he was a commander of a sloop of war, and bore the reputation of a gallant officer; that he married the daughter of a rich merchant in the city of London, against the inclination and without the knowledge of her father, who renounced her for this act of disobedience; that the captain consoled himself for the rigour of the parent, with the possession of the lady, who was not only remarkably beautiful in person, but highly accomplished in her mind, and amiable in her disposition. Such, a few months ago, were those two persons whom you saw acting in such a vulgar capacity. When they first entered the prison, they were undoubtedly the handsomest couple mine eyes ever beheld, and their appearance won universal respect even from the most brutal inhabitants of the jail.

"The captain, having unwarily involved himself as a security for a man to whom he had lain under obligations, became liable for a considerable sum, and his own father-in-law being the sole creditor of the bankrupt, took this opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon him for having espoused his daughter. He watched an opportunity until the captain had actually stepped into the post-chaise with his lady for Portsmouth, where his ship lay, and caused him to be arrested in the most public and shameful manner. Mrs. Clewline had like to have sunk under the first transports of her grief and mortification; but these subsiding, she had recourse to personal solicitation. She went with her only child in her arms, a lovely boy, to her father's door, and, being denied admittance, kneeled down in the street, imploring his compassion in the most pathetic strain; but this hard-hearted citizen, instead of recognising his child, and taking the poor mourner to his bosom, insulted her from the window with the most bitter reproach, saying, among other shocking expressions, 'Strumpet, take yourself away with your brat, otherwise I shall send for the beadle, and have you to Bridewell.'

"The unfortunate lady was cut to the heart by this usage, and fainted in the street, from whence she was conveyed to a public-house by the charity of some passengers. She afterwards attempted to soften the barbarity of her father by repeated letters, and by interesting some of his friends to intercede with him in her behalf; but all her endeavours proving ineffectual, she accompanied her husband to the

prison of the King's Bench, where she must have felt, in the severest manner, the fatal reverse of circumstance to which she was exposed.

"The captain being disabled from going to sea, was superseded, and he saw all his hopes blasted in the midst of an active war, at a time when he had the fairest prospects of fame and fortune. He saw himself reduced to extreme poverty, cooped up with the tender partner of his heart in a wretched hovel, amidst the refuse of mankind, and on the brink of wanting the common necessaries of life. The mind of man is ever ingenious in finding resources. He comforted his lady with vain hopes of having friends who would effect his deliverance, and repeated assurances of this kind so long, that he at length began to think they were not altogether void of foundation.

"Mrs. Clewline, from a principle of duty, recollected all her fortitude, that she might not only bear her fate with patience, but even contribute to alleviate the woes of her husband, whom her affection had ruined. She affected to believe the suggestions of his pretended hope; she interchanged with him assurances of better fortune; her appearance exhibited a calm, while her heart was torn with anguish. She assisted him in writing letters to former friends, the last consolation of the wretched prisoner; she delivered these letters with her own hand, and underwent a thousand mortifying repulses, the most shocking circumstances of which she concealed from her husband. She performed all the menial offices in her own little family, which was maintained by

pawning her apparel; and both the husband and wife, in some measure, sweetened their cares by prattling and toying with their charming little boy, on whom they doated with an enthusiasm of fondness. Yet even this pleasure was mingled with the most tender and melancholy regret. I have seen the mother hang over him, with the most affecting expression of this kind in her aspect, the tears contending with the smiles upon her countenance, while she exclaimed, 'Alas! my poor prisoner, little did your mother once think she should be obliged to nurse you in a jail.' The captain's paternal love was dashed with impatience; he would snatch up the boy in a transport of grief, press him to his breast, devour him as it were with kisses, throw up his eyes to heaven in the most emphatic silence, then convey the child hastily to his mother's arms, pull his hat over his eyes, stalk out into the common walk, and, finding himself alone, break out into tears and lamentation.

"Ah! little did this unhappy couple know what further griefs awaited them! The smallpox broke out in the prison, and poor Tommy Clewline was infected. As the eruption appeared unfavourable, you may conceive the consternation with which they were overwhelmed. Their distress was rendered inconceivable by indigence; for by this time they were so destitute, that they could neither pay for common attendance, nor procure proper advice. I did on that occasion what I thought my duty towards my fellow-creatures. I wrote to a physician of my acquaintance, who was humane enough to visit the

poor little patient; I engaged a careful woman-prisoner as a nurse, and Mr. Norton supplied them with money and necessaries. These helps were barely sufficient to preserve them from the horrors of despair, when they saw their little darling panting under the rage of a loathsome pestilential malady, during the excessive heat of the dog-days, and struggling for breath in the noxious atmosphere of a confined cabin, where they scarce had room to turn on the most necessary occasions. The eager curiosity with which the mother eyed the doctor's looks as often as he visited the boy; the terror and trepidation of the father, while he desired to know his opinion; in a word, the whole tenor of their distress baffled all description.

"At length the physician, for the sake of his own character, was obliged to be explicit; and, returning with the captain to the common walk, told him, in my hearing, that the child could not possibly recover. This sentence seemed to have petrified the unfortunate parent, who stood motionless, and seemingly bereft of sense. I led him to my apartment, where he sat a full hour in that state of stupefaction; then he began to groan hideously, a shower of tears burst from his eyes, he threw himself on the floor, and uttered the most piteous lamentation that ever was heard. Meanwhile, Mrs. Norton being made acquainted with the doctor's prognostic, visited Mrs. Clewline, and invited her to the lodge. Her prophetic fears immediately took the alarm. 'What!' cried she, starting up with a frantic wildness in her looks, 'then our case is desperate — I shall lose my dear

Tommy! — the poor prisoner will be released by the hand of Heaven! — Death will convey him to the cold grave!' The dying innocent hearing this exclamation, pronounced these words, 'Tommy won't leave you, my dear mamma; if death comes to take Tommy, papa shall drive him away with his sword.' This address deprived the wretched mother of all resignation to the will of Providence. She tore her hair, dashed herself on the pavement, shrieked aloud, and was carried off in a deplorable state of distraction.

"That same evening the lovely babe expired, and the father grew frantic. He made an attempt on his own life; and, being with difficulty restrained, his agitation sunk into a kind of sullen insensibility, which seemed to absorb all sentiment, and gradually vulgarised his faculty of thinking. In order to dissipate the violence of his sorrow, he continually shifted the scene from one company to another, contracted abundance of low connexions, and drowned his cares in repeated intoxication. The unhappy lady underwent a long series of hysterical fits and other complaints, which seemed to have a fatal effect on her brain as well as constitution. Cordials were administered to keep up her spirits; and she found it necessary to protract the use of them to blunt the edge of grief, by overwhelming reflection, and remove the sense of uneasiness arising from a disorder in her stomach. In a word, she became an habitual dram-drinker; and this practice exposed her to such communication as debauched her reason, and perverted her sense of decorum and propriety. She and her

husband gave a loose to vulgar excess, in which they were enabled to indulge by the charity and interest of some friends, who obtained half-pay for the captain.

"They are now metamorphosed into the shocking creatures you have seen; he into a riotous plebeian, and she into a ragged trull. They are both drunk every day, quarrel and fight one with another, and often insult their fellow-prisoners. Yet they are not wholly abandoned by virtue and humanity. The captain is scrupulously honest in all his dealings, and pays off his debts punctually every quarter, as soon as he receives his half-pay. Every prisoner in distress is welcome to share his money while it lasts; and his wife never fails, while it is in her power, to relieve the wretched; so that their generosity, even in this miserable disguise, is universally respected by their neighbours. Sometimes the recollection of their former rank comes over them like a qualm, which they dispel with brandy, and then humorously rally one another on their mutual degeneracy. She often stops me in the walk, and, pointing to the captain, says, 'My husband, though he is become a blackguard jail-bird, must be allowed to be a handsome fellow still.' — On the other hand, he will frequently desire me to take notice of his rib, as she chances to pass. — 'Mind that draggle-tailed drunken drab,' he will say; 'what an antidote it is — yet, for all that, Felton, she was a fine woman when I married her — Poor Bess, I have been the ruin of her, that is certain, and deserve to be d—ned for bringing her to this pass.'

"Thus they accommodate themselves to each other's infirmities, and pass their time not without some taste of plebeian enjoyment — but, name their child, they never fail to burst into tears, and still feel a return of the most poignant sorrow."

Sir Launcelot Greaves did not hear this story unmoved. Tom Clarke's cheeks were bedewed with the drops of sympathy, while, with much sobbing, he declared his opinion, that an action should lie against the lady's father.

Captain Crowe having listened to the story with uncommon attention, expressed his concern that an honest seaman should be so taken in stays; but he imputed all his calamities to the wife. "For why?" said he; "a seafaring man may have a sweetheart in every port; but he should steer clear of a wife, as he would avoid a quicksand. — You see, brother, how this here Clewline lags astern in the wake of a snivelling b—h; otherwise he would never make a weft in his ensign for the loss of a child — odds heart! he could have done no more if he had sprung a top-mast, or started a timber."

The knight declaring that he would take another view of the prison in the afternoon, Mr. Felton insisted upon his doing him the honour to drink a dish of tea in his apartment, and Sir Launcelot accepted his invitation. Thither they accordingly repaired, after having made another circuit of the jail, and the tea-things were produced by Mrs. Felton, when she was summoned to the door, and in a few minutes returning, communicated something in a whisper to her husband. He changed colour, and

repaired to the staircase, where he was heard to talk aloud in an angry tone.

When he came back, he told the company he had been teased by a very importunate beggar. Addressing himself to our adventurer, "You took notice," says he, "of a fine lady flaunting about our walk in all the frippery of the fashion. She was lately a gay young widow that made a great figure at the court-end of the town; she distinguished herself by her splendid equipage, her rich liveries, her brilliant assemblies, her numerous routs, and her elegant taste in dress and furniture. She is nearly related to some of the best families in England, and, it must be owned, mistress of many fine accomplishments. But being deficient in true delicacy, she endeavoured to hide that defect by affectation. She pretended to a thousand antipathies which did not belong to her nature. A breast of veal threw her into mortal agonies; if she saw a spider, she screamed; and at sight of a mouse she fainted away. She could not, without horror, behold an entire joint of meat; and nothing but fricassees and other made dishes were seen upon her table. She caused all her floors to be lined with green baize, that she might trip along them with more ease and pleasure. Her footmen wore clogs, which were deposited in the hall, and both they and her chairmen were laid under the strongest injunctions to avoid porter and tobacco. Her jointure amounted to eight hundred pounds per annum, and she made shift to spend four times that sum. At length it was mortgaged for nearly the entire value; but, far from retrenching, she seemed to increase in extravagance, until her effects were

taken in execution, and her person here deposited in safe custody.

"When one considers the abrupt transition she underwent from her spacious apartments to an hovel scarce eight feet square; from sumptuous furniture to bare benches; from magnificence to meanness; from affluence to extreme poverty; one would imagine she must have been totally overwhelmed by such a sudden gush of misery. But this was not the case. She has, in fact, no delicate feelings. She forthwith accommodated herself to the exigency of her fortune; yet she still affects to keep state amidst the miseries of a jail; and this affectation is truly ridiculous. She lies a-bed till two o'clock in the afternoon. She maintains a female attendant for the sole purpose of dressing her person. Her cabin is the least cleanly in the whole prison; she has learned to eat bread and cheese and drink porter; but she always appears once a day dressed in the pink of the fashion. She has found means to run in debt at the chandler's shop, the baker's, and the tap-house, though there is nothing got in this place but with ready money. She has even borrowed small sums from divers prisoners, who were themselves on the brink of starving. She takes pleasure in being surrounded with duns, observing, that by such people a person of fashion is to be distinguished. She writes circular letters to her former friends and acquaintance, and by this method has raised pretty considerable contributions; for she writes in a most elegant and irresistible style. About a fortnight ago she received a supply of twenty guineas; when, instead of paying

her little jail-debts, or withdrawing any part of her apparel from pawn, she laid out the whole sum in a fashionable suit and laces; and next day borrowed of me a shilling to purchase a neck of mutton for her dinner. She seems to think her rank in life entitles her to this kind of assistance. She talks very pompously of her family and connexions, by whom however she has been long renounced. She has no sympathy nor compassion for the distresses of her fellow-creatures; but she is perfectly well bred; she bears a repulse the best of any woman I ever knew; and her temper has never been once ruffled since her arrival at the King's Bench. She now entreated me to lend her half-a-guinea, for which she said she had the most pressing occasion, and promised upon her honour it should be repaid to-morrow; but I lent a deaf ear to her request, and told her in plain terms that her honour was already bankrupt."

Sir Launcelot, thrusting his hand mechanically into his pocket, pulled out a couple of guineas, and desired Felton to accommodate her with that trifle in his own name; but he declined the proposal, and refused to touch the money. "God forbid," said he, "that I should attempt to thwart your charitable intention; but this, my good sir, is no object — she has many resources. Neither should we number the clamorous beggar among those who really feel distress; he is generally gorged with bounty misapplied. The liberal hand of charity should be extended to modest want that pines in silence, encountering cold, nakedness, and hunger, and every species of distress. Here you may find the wretch of

keen sensations blasted by accident in the blossom of his fortune, shivering in the solitary recess of indigence, disdaining to beg, and even ashamed to let his misery be known. Here you may see the parent who has known happier times, surrounded by his tender offspring, naked and forlorn, demanding food, which his circumstances cannot afford.

"That man of decent appearance and melancholy aspect, who lifted his hat as you passed him in the yard, is a person of unblemished character. He was a reputable tradesman in the city, and failed through inevitable losses. A commission of bankruptcy was taken out against him by his sole creditor, a quaker, who refused to sign his certificate. He has lived three years in prison, with a wife and five small children. In a little time after his commitment, he had friends who offered to pay ten shillings in the pound of what he owed, and to give security for paying the remainder in three years by instalments. The honest quaker did not charge the bankrupt with any dishonest practices, but he rejected the proposal with the most mortifying indifference, declaring that he did not want his money. The mother repaired to his house, and kneeling before him with her five lovely children, implored mercy with tears and exclamations. He stood this scene unmoved, and even seemed to enjoy the prospect, wearing the looks of complacency, while his heart was steeled with rancour. 'Woman,' said he, 'these be hopeful babes, if they were duly nurtured. Go thy ways in peace; I have taken my resolution.' Her friends maintained the family for some time; but it is not in human

charity to persevere; some of them died, some of them grew unfortunate, some of them fell off, and now the poor man is reduced to the extremity of indigence, from whence he has no prospect of being retrieved. The fourth part of what you would have bestowed upon the lady would make this poor man and his family sing with joy."

He had scarce pronounced these words, when our hero desired the man might be called, and in a few minutes he entered the apartment with a low obeisance. "Mr. Coleby," said the knight, "I have heard how cruelly you have been used by your creditor, and beg you will accept this trifling present, if it can be of any service to you in your distress." So saying, he put five guineas into his hand. The poor man was so confounded at such an unlooked-for acquisition, that he stood motionless and silent, unable to thank the donor; and Mr. Felton conveyed him to the door, observing that his heart was too full for utterance. But in a little time his wife bursting into the room with her five children, looked around, and going up to Sir Launcelot without any direction, exclaimed, "This is the angel sent by Providence to succour me and my poor innocents." Then falling at his feet, she pressed his hand and bathed it with her tears. He raised her up with that complacency which was natural to his disposition. He kissed all her children, who were remarkably handsome and neatly kept, though in homely apparel; and, giving her his direction, assured her she might always apply to him in her distress.

After her departure, he produced a bank-note of

twenty pounds, and would have deposited it in the hands of Mr. Felton, to be distributed in charities among the objects of the place; but he desired it might be left with Mr. Norton, who was the proper person for managing his benevolence, and he promised to assist the deputy with his advice in laying it out.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

IN WHICH CAPTAIN CROWE IS SUBLIMED INTO THE REGIONS OF ASTROLOGY.

THREE whole days had our adventurer prosecuted his inquiry about the amiable Aurelia, whom he sought in every place of public and of private entertainment or resort, without obtaining the least satisfactory intelligence, when he received one evening, from the hands of a porter, who instantly vanished, the following billet:

"If you would learn the particulars of Miss Darnel's fate fail not to be in the fields by the Foundling Hospital, precisely at seven o'clock this evening, when you shall be met by a person who will give you the satisfaction you desire, together with his reason for addressing you in this mysterious manner."

Had this intimation concerned any other subject, perhaps the knight would have deliberated with himself in what manner he should take a hint so darkly communicated. But his eagerness to retrieve the jewel he had lost divested him of all his caution; the time of assignation was already at hand, and neither the captain nor his nephew could be found to accompany him, had he been disposed to make use of their attendance. He therefore, after a

moment's hesitation, repaired to the place appointed, in the utmost agitation and anxiety, lest the hour should be elapsed before his arrival.

Crowe was one of those defective spirits who cannot subsist for any length of time on their own bottoms. He wanted a familiar prop, upon which he could disburden his cares, his doubts, and his humours; an humble friend who would endure his caprices, and with whom he could communicate, free of all reserve and restraint. Though he loved his nephew's person, and admired his parts, he considered him often as a little petulant jackanapes, who presumed upon his superior understanding; and as for Sir Launcelot, there was something in his character that overawed the seaman, and kept him at a disagreeable distance. He had, in this dilemma, cast his eyes upon Timothy Crabshaw, and admitted him to a considerable share of familiarity and fellowship. These companions had been employed in smoking a social pipe at an alehouse in the neighbourhood, when the knight made his excursion; and returning to the house about supper-time, found Mr. Clarke in waiting.

The young lawyer was alarmed when he heard the hour of ten, without seeing our adventurer, who had been used to be extremely regular in his economy; and the captain and he supped in profound silence. Finding, upon inquiry among the servants, that the knight went out abruptly, in consequence of having received a billet, Tom began to be visited with the apprehension of a duel, and sat the best part of the night by his uncle, sweating with the expectation of

seeing our hero brought home a breathless corpse. But no tidings of him arriving, he, about two in the morning, repaired to his own lodging, resolved to publish a description of Sir Launcelot in the newspapers, if he should not appear next day.

Crowe did not pass the time without uneasiness. He was extremely concerned at the thought of some mischief having befallen his friend and patron; and he was terrified with the apprehensions, that, in case Sir Launcelot was murdered, his spirit might come and give him notice of his fate. Now he had an insuperable aversion to all correspondence with the dead; and taking it for granted that the spirit of his departed friend could not appear to him except when he should be alone, and a-bed in the dark, he determined to pass the remainder of the night without going to bed. For this purpose, his first care was to visit the garret, in which Timothy Crabshaw lay fast asleep, snoring with his mouth wide open. Him the captain with difficulty roused, by dint of promising to regale him with a bowl of rum punch in the kitchen, where the fire, which had been extinguished, was soon rekindled. The ingredients were fetched from a public-house in the neighbourhood; for the captain was too proud to use his interest in the knight's family, especially at these hours, when all the rest of the servants had retired to their repose; and he and Timothy drank together until daybreak, the conversation turning upon hobgoblins, and God's revenge against murder.

The cookmaid lay in a little apartment contiguous to the kitchen; and whether disturbed by these hor-

rible tales of apparitions, or titillated by the savoury steams that issued from the punch-bowl, she made a virtue of necessity, or appetite, and dressing herself in the dark, suddenly appeared before them to the no small perturbation of both. Timothy, in particular, was so startled, that, in his endeavours to make a hasty retreat towards the chimney-corner, he overturned the table; the liquor was spilt, but the bowl was saved by falling on a heap of ashes. Mrs. Cook having reprimanded him for his foolish fear, declared, she had got up betimes, in order to scour her saucepans; and the captain proposed to have the bowl replenished, if materials could be procured. This difficulty was overcome by Crabshaw; and they sat down with their new associate to discuss the second edition.

The knight's sudden disappearing being brought upon the carpet, their female companion gave it as her opinion, that nothing would be so likely to bring this affair to light, as going to a cunning man, whom she had lately consulted about a silver spoon that was mislaid, and who told her all the things that she ever did, and ever would happen to her through the whole course of her life.

Her two companions pricked up their ears at this intelligence; and Crowe asked if the spoon had been found. She answered in the affirmative; and said the cunning man described to a hair the person that should be her true lover, and her wedded husband; that he was a seafaring man; that he was pretty well stricken in years — a little passionate or so; and that he went with his fingers clinched like, as it were.

The captain began to sweat at this description, and mechanically thrust his hands into his pockets; while Crabshaw pointing to him, told her he believed she had got the right sow by the ear. Crowe grumbled, that mayhap for all that he should not be brought up by such a grappling neither. Then he asked if this cunning man dealt with the devil, declaring, in that case, he would keep clear of him; for why? because he must have sold himself to Old Scratch; and, being a servant of the devil, how could he be a good subject to his majesty? Mrs. Cook assured him, the conjurer was a good Christian; and that he gained all his knowledge by conversing with the stars and planets. Thus satisfied, the two friends resolved to consult him as soon as it should be light; and being directed to the place of his habitation, set out for it by seven in the morning.

They found the house forsaken, and had already reached the end of the lane in their return, when they were accosted by an old woman, who gave them to understand, that if they had occasion for the advice of a fortune-teller, as she did suppose they had, from their stopping at the house where Dr. Grubble lived, she would conduct them to a person of much more eminence in that profession; at the same time she informed them, that the said Grubble had been lately sent to Bridewell; a circumstance which, with all his art, he had not been able to foresee. The captain, without any scruple, put himself and his companion under convoy of this beldame, who, through many windings and turnings, brought them to the door of a ruinous house, standing in a blind

alley; which door having opened with a key drawn from her pocket, she introduced them into a parlour, where they saw no other furniture than a naked bench, and some frightful figures on the bare walls, drawn or rather scrawled with charcoal.

Here she left them locked in, until she should give the doctor notice of their arrival; and they amused themselves with decyphering these characters and hieroglyphics. The first figure that engaged their attention was that of a man hanging upon a gibbet, which both considered as an unfavourable omen, and each endeavoured to avert from his own person. Crabshaw observed, that the figure so suspended was clothed in a sailor's jacket and trowsers; a truth which the captain could not deny, but, on the other hand, he affirmed, that the said figure exhibited the very nose and chin of Timothy, together with the hump on one shoulder. A warm dispute ensued, and being maintained with much acrimonious altercation, might have dissolved the new-cemented friendship of those two originals, had it not been interrupted by the old sibyl, who, coming into the parlour, intimated that the doctor waited for them above. She likewise told them, that he never admitted more than one at a time. This hint occasioned a fresh contest. The captain insisted upon Crabshaw's making sail a-head, in order to look out afore; but Timothy persisted in refusing this honour, declaring he did not pretend to lead, but he would follow, as in duty bound. The old gentlewoman abridged the ceremony by leading out Crabshaw with one hand, and locking up Crowe with the other.

The former was dragged upstairs like a bear to the stake, not without reluctance and terror, which did not at all abate at sight of the conjurer, with whom he was immediately shut up by his conductress, after she had told him in a whisper, that he must deposit a shilling in a little black coffin, supported by a human skull and thigh-bones crossed, on a stool covered with black baize, that stood in one corner of the apartment. The squire, having made this offer with fear and trembling, ventured to survey the objects around him, which were very well calculated to augment his confusion. He saw divers skeletons hung by the head, the stuffed skin of a young alligator, a calf with two heads, and several snakes suspended from the ceiling, with the jaws of a shark, and a starved weasel. On another funeral table he beheld two spheres, between which lay a book open, exhibiting outlandish characters, and mathematical diagrams. On one side stood an ink-standish with paper; and behind this desk appeared the conjurer himself, in sable vestments, his head so overshadowed with hair, that, far from contemplating his features, Timothy could distinguish nothing but a long white beard, which, for aught he knew, might have belonged to a four-legged goat, as well as to a two-legged astrologer.

This apparition, which the squire did not eye without manifest discomposure, extending a white wand, made certain evolutions over the head of Timothy, and having muttered an ejaculation, commanded him, in a hollow tone, to come forward and declare his name. Crabshaw, thus adjured, advanced to the

altar; and, whether from design, or (which is more probable) from confusion, answered, "Samuel Crowe." The conjurer taking up the pen, and making a few scratches on the paper, exclaimed, in a terrific accent, "How! miscreant! attempt to impose upon the stars? — You look more like a *crab* than a *crow*, and was born under the sign of Cancer." The squire, almost annihilated by this exclamation, fell upon his knees, crying, "I pray yaw, my lord conjurer's worship, pardon my ignorance, and down't go to baind me over to the Red Sea like — I'se a poor Yorkshire tyke, and would no more cheat the stars, than I'd cheat my own vather, as the saying is — a must be a good hand at *trapping*, that catches the stars a *napping* — but as your honour's worship observed, my name is Tim Crabshaw, of the East Raiding, groom and squair to Sir Launcelot Greaves, baron knaight, and arrant-knaight, who ran mad for a wench, as your worship's conjuration well knoweth. The person below is Captain Crowe; and we coom by Margery Cook's recommendation, to seek after my master, who is gone away, or made away, the Lord he knows how and where."

Here he was interrupted by the conjurer, who exhorted him to sit down and compose himself till he should cast a figure; then he scrawled the paper, and waving his wand, repeated abundance of gibberish concerning the number, the names, the houses, and revolutions of the planets, with their conjunctions, oppositions, signs, circles; cycles, trines, and trigons. When he perceived that this artifice had its proper effect in disturbing the brain of Crabshaw, he pro-

ceeded to tell him from the stars, that his name was Crabshaw, or Crabsclaw; that he was born in the East Riding of Yorkshire, of poor, yet honest parents, and had some skill in horses; and that he served a gentleman whose name began with the letter G—, which gentleman had run mad for love, and left his family; but whether he would return alive or dead, the stars had not yet determined.

Poor Timothy was thunderstruck to find the conjurer acquainted with all these circumstances, and begged to know if he might be so bauld as to ax a question or two about his own fortune. The astrologer pointing to the little coffin, our squire understood the hint, and deposited another shilling. The sage had recourse to his book, erected another scheme, performed once more his airy evolutions with the wand, and having recited another mystical preamble, expounded the book of fate in these words: "You shall neither die by war nor water, by hunger or by thirst, nor be brought to the grave by old age or distemper; but, let me see — ay, the stars will have it so — you shall be — exalted — hah! — ay, that is — hanged for horse-stealing." — "O good my lord conjurer!" roared the squire, "I'd as lief give forty shillings as be hanged." — "Peace, sirrah!" cried the other; "would you contradict or reverse the immutable decrees of fate? Hanging is your destiny, and hanged you shall be — and comfort yourself with the reflection, that as you are not the first, so neither will you be the last to swing on Tyburn tree." This comfortable assurance composed the mind of Timothy, and in a great measure reconciled him to the predic-

tion. He now proceeded in a whining tone, to ask whether he should suffer for the first fact; whether it would be for a horse or a mare, and of what colour, that he might know when his hour was come. The conjurer gravely answered, that he would steal a dappled gelding on a Wednesday, be cast at the Old Bailey on Thursday, and suffer on a Friday; and he strenuously recommended it to him to appear in the cart with a nosegay in one hand, and the Whole Duty of Man in the other. "But if in case it should be in the winter," said the squire, "when a nosegay can't be had?"—"Why, then," replied the conjurer, "an orange will do as well."

These material points being adjusted to the entire satisfaction of Timothy, he declared he would bestow another shilling to know the fortune of an old companion, who truly did not deserve so much at his hands, but he could not help loving him better than e'er a friend he had in the world. So saying, he dropped a third offering in the coffin, and desired to know the fate of his horse Gilbert. The astrologer having again consulted his art, pronounced that Gilbert would die of the staggers, and his carcase be given to the hounds; a sentence which made a much deeper impression upon Crabshaw's mind, than did the prediction of his own untimely and disgraceful fate. He shed a plenteous shower of tears, and his grief broke forth in some passionate expressions of tenderness. At length he told the astrologer he would go and send up the captain, who wanted to consult him about Margery Cook, because as how she had informed him that Dr. Grubble had described

just such another man as the captain for her true love; and he had no great stomach to the match, if so be as the stars were not bent upon their coming together.

Accordingly the squire being dismissed by the conjurer, descended to the parlour with a rueful length of face, which being perceived by the captain, he demanded, "What cheer, ho?" with some signs of apprehension. Crabshaw making no return to this salute, he asked if the conjurer had taken an observation, and told him anything. Then the other replied, he had told him more than he desired to know. "Why, an that be the case," said the seaman, "I have no occasion to go aloft this trip, brother."

This evasion would not serve his turn. Old Tisiphone was at hand, and led him up growling into the hall of audience, which he did not examine without trepidation. Having been directed to the coffin, where he presented half a crown, in hope of rendering the fates more propitious, the usual ceremony was performed, and the doctor addressed him in these words: "Approach, Raven." The captain advancing, "You an't much mistaken, brother," said he, "heave your eye into the binnacle, and box your compass, you'll find I 'm a Crowe, not a Raven, thof indeed they be both fowls of a feather, as the saying is." — "I know it," cried the conjurer, "thou art a northern crow, — a sea-crow; not a crow of prey, but a crow to be preyed upon; — a crow to be plucked, — to be flayed, — to be basted, — to be broiled by Margery upon the gridiron of matrimony." The novice changing colour at this denunciation, "I do

understand your signals, brother," said he, "and if it be set down in the log-book of fate that we must grapple, why then 'ware timbers. But as I know how the land lies, d'ye see, and the current of my inclination sets me off, I shall haul up close to the wind, and mayhap we shall clear Cape Margery. But howsomever, we shall leave that reef in the fore top-sail. — I was bound upon another voyage, d'ye see — to look and to see, and to know if so be as how I could pick up any intelligence along shore concerning my friend Sir Launcelot, who slipped his cable last night, and has lost company, d'ye see."

"What!" exclaimed the cunning man; "art thou a crow, and canst not smell carrion? If thou wouldst grieve for Greaves, behold his naked carcase lies unburied, to feed the kites, the crows, the gulls, the rooks, and ravens." — "What! broach'd to?" — "Dead as a boil'd lobster." — "Odd's heart, friend, these are the heaviest tidings I have heard these seven long years — there must have been deadly odds when he lowered his top-sails — smite my eyes! I had rather the *Mufti* had foundered at sea, with myself and all my generation on board — well fare thy soul, flower of the world! had honest Sam Crowe been within hail — but what signifies palavering?" Here the tears of unaffected sorrow flowed plentifully down the furrows of the seaman's cheeks; — then his grief giving way to his indignation, "Hark ye, brother conjurer," said he, "you can spy foul weather before it comes, d—n your eyes! why did not you give us warning of this here squall? B—st my limbs! I 'll make you give an account of this here d—ned,

horrid, confounded murder, d' ye see — mayhap you yourself was concerned, d' ye see. — For my own part, brother, I put my trust in God, and steer by the compass, and I value not your paw-wawing and your conjuration of a rope's end, d' ye see."

The conjurer was by no means pleased, either with the matter or the manner of this address. He therefore began to soothe the captain's choler, by representing that he did not pretend to omniscience, which was the attribute of God alone; that human art was fallible and imperfect; and all that it could perform was to discover certain partial circumstances of any particular object to which its inquiries were directed. That being questioned by the other man concerning the cause of his master's disappearing, he had exercised his skill upon the subject, and found reason to believe that Sir Launcelot was assassinated; that he should think himself happy in being the instrument of bringing the murderers to justice, though he foresaw they would of themselves save him that trouble; for they would quarrel about dividing the spoil, and one would give information against the other.

The prospect of this satisfaction appeased the resentment, and, in some measure, mitigated the grief of Captain Crowe, who took his leave without much ceremony; and, being joined by Crabshaw, proceeded with a heavy heart to the house of Sir Launcelot, where they found the domestics at breakfast, without exhibiting the least symptom of concern for their absent master. Crowe had been wise enough to conceal from Crabshaw what he had

learned of the knight's fate. This fatal intelligence he reserved for the ear of his nephew, Mr. Clarke, who did not fail to attend him in the forenoon.

As for the squire, he did nothing but ruminate in rueful silence upon the dappled gelding, the nosegay, and the predicted fate of Gilbert. Him he forthwith visited in the stable, and saluted with the kiss of peace. Then he bemoaned his fortune with tears, and by the sound of his own lamentation was lulled asleep among the litter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

IN WHICH THE CLOUDS THAT COVER THE CATASTROPHE BEGIN TO DISPERSE.

WE must now leave Captain Crowe and his nephew Mr. Clarke, arguing with great vehemence about the fatal intelligence obtained from the conjurer, and penetrate at once the veil that concealed our hero. Know then, reader, that Sir Launcelot Greaves, repairing to the place described in the billet which he had received, was accosted by a person muffled in a cloak, who began to amuse him with a feigned story of Aurelia, to which, while he listened with great attention, he found himself suddenly surrounded by armed men, who seized and pinioned down his arms, took away his sword, and conveyed him by force into a hackney-coach provided for the purpose. In vain he expostulated on this violence with three persons who accompanied him in the vehicle. He could not extort one word by way of reply; and, from their gloomy aspects, he began to be apprehensive of assassination. Had the carriage passed through any frequented place, he would have endeavoured to alarm the inhabitants, but it was already clear of the town, and his conductors took care to avoid all villages and inhabited houses.

After having travelled about two miles, the coach stopped at a large iron gate, which being opened, our adventurer was led in silence through a spacious house into a tolerably decent apartment, which he understood was intended for his bed-chamber. In a few minutes after his arrival, he was visited by a man of no very prepossessing appearance, who endeavouring to smooth his countenance, which was naturally stern, welcomed our adventurer to his house; exhorted him to be of good cheer, assuring him he should want for nothing, and desired to know what he would choose for supper.

Sir Launcelot, in answer to this civil address, begged he would explain the nature of his confinement, and the reasons for which his arms were tied like those of the worst malefactor. The other postponed till to-morrow the explanation he demanded, but in the meantime unbound his fetters, and, as he declined eating, left him alone to his repose. He took care, however, in retiring, to double lock the door of the room, whose windows were grated on the outside with iron.

The knight, being thus abandoned to his own meditations, began to ruminate on the present adventure with equal surprise and concern; but the more he revolved circumstances, the more was he perplexed in his conjectures. According to the state of the mind, a very subtle philosopher is often puzzled by a very plain proposition; and this was the case of our adventurer. — What made the strongest impression upon his mind was a notion that he was apprehended on suspicion of treasonable prac-

tices, by a warrant from the Secretary of State, in consequence of some false malicious information; and that his prison was no other than the house of a messenger, set apart for the accommodation of suspected persons. In this opinion he comforted himself by recollecting his own conscious innocence, and reflecting that he should be entitled to the privilege of *habeas corpus*, as the act including that inestimable jewel was happily not suspended at this time.

Consoled by this self-assurance, he quietly resigned himself to slumber; but before he fell asleep, he was very disagreeably undeceived in his conjecture. His ears were all at once saluted with a noise from the next room, conveyed in distinct bounces against the wainscot; then a hoarse voice exclaimed, "Bring up the artillery — let Brutandorf's brigade advance — detach my black hussars to ravage the country — let them be new booted — take particular care of the spur-leathers — make a desert of Lusatia — bombard the suburbs of Pera — go, tell my brother Henry to pass the Elbe at Meissen with forty battalions and fifty squadrons — so ho, you Major-General Donder, why don't you finish your second parallel? — send hither the engineer Shittenback — I 'll lay all the shoes in my shop, the breach will be practicable in four-and-twenty hours — don't tell me of your works; you and your works be d—n'd."

"Assuredly," cried another voice from a different quarter, "he that thinks to be saved by works is in a state of utter reprobation — I myself was a profane weaver, and trusted to the rottenness of works

— I kept my journeymen and 'prentices at constant work, and my heart was set upon the riches of this world, which was a wicked work — but now I have got a glimpse of the new light — I feel the operations of grace — I am of the new birth — I abhor good works — I detest all working but the working of the Spirit — avaunt, Satan — O ! how I thirst for communication with our sister Jolly."

"The communication is already open with the Marche," said the first, "but as for thee, thou caitiff, who hast presumed to disparage my works, I 'll have thee rammed into a mortar with a double charge of powder, and thrown into the enemy's quarters."

This dialogue operated like a train upon many other inhabitants of the place; one swore he was within three vibrations of finding the longitude, when this noise confounded his calculation; a second, in broken English, complained he vas distorped in the moment of de proshection; a third, in the character of His Holiness, denounced interdiction, excommunication, and anathemas; and swore by St. Peter's keys, they should howl ten thousand years in purgatory, without the benefit of a single mass. A fourth began to halloo in all the vociferation of a fox-hunter in the chase; and in an instant the whole house was in an uproar.

The clamour, however, was of a short duration. The different chambers being opened successively, every individual was effectually silenced by the sound of one cabalistical word, which was no other than *Waistcoat.* A charm which at once cowed the

King of P——, dispossessed the fanatic, dumbfounded the mathematician, dismayed the alchemist, deposed the Pope, and deprived the squire of all utterance.

Our adventurer was no longer in doubt concerning the place to which he had been conveyed; and the more he reflected on his situation, the more he was overwhelmed with the most perplexing chagrin. He could not conceive by whose means he had been immured in a madhouse; but he heartily repented of his knight-errantry, as a frolic which might have very serious consequences, with respect to his future life and fortune. After mature deliberation, he resolved to demean himself with the utmost circumspection, well knowing that every violent transport would be interpreted into an undeniable symptom of insanity. He was not without hope of being able to move his jailor by a due administration of that which is generally more efficacious than all the flowers of elocution; but when he rose in the morning, he found his pockets had been carefully examined, and emptied of all his papers and cash.

The keeper entering, he inquired about these particulars, and was given to understand, that they were all safe deposited for his use, to be forthcoming at a proper season. But, at present, as he should want nothing, he had no occasion for money. The knight acquiesced in this declaration, and eat his breakfast in quiet.

About eleven, he received a visit from the physician, who contemplated his looks with great solemnity; and having examined his pulse, shook his

head, saying, "Well, sir, how d'ye do?—come, don't be dejected—everything is for the best—you are in very good hands, sir, I assure you; and I dare say will refuse nothing that may be thought conducive to the recovery of your health."

"Doctor," said our hero, "if it is not an improper question to ask, I should be glad to know your opinion of my disorder."—"Oh! sir, as to that," replied the physician, "your disorder is a—kind of a—sir, 't is very common in this country—a sort of a"—"Do you think my distemper is madness, doctor?"—"O Lord, sir,—not absolute madness—no—not madness—you have heard, no doubt, of what is called a weakness of the nerves, sir,—though that is a very inaccurate expression; for this phrase, denoting a morbid excess of sensation, seems to imply that sensation itself is owing to the loose cohesion of those material particles which constitute the nervous substance, inasmuch as the quantity of every effect must be proportionable to its cause; now you 'll please to take notice, sir, if the case were really what these words seem to import, all bodies, whose particles do not cohere with too great a degree of proximity, would be nervous; that is, endued with sensation. Sir, I shall order some cooling things to keep you in due temperature; and you 'll do very well—sir, your humble servant."

So saying, he retired, and our adventurer could not but think it was very hard that one man should not dare to ask the most ordinary question without being reputed mad, while another should talk nonsense by the hour, and yet be esteemed as an oracle.

The master of the house finding Sir Launcelot so tame and tractable, indulged him after dinner with a walk in a little private garden, under the eye of a servant who followed him at a distance. Here he was saluted by a brother-prisoner, a man seemingly turned of thirty, tall and thin, with staring eyes, a hook-nose, and a face covered with pimples.

The usual compliments having passed, the stranger, without further ceremony, asked him if he would oblige him with a chew of tobacco, or could spare him a mouthful of any sort of cordial, declaring he had not tasted brandy since he came to the house. The knight assured him it was not in his power to comply with his request; and began to ask some questions relating to the character of their landlord, which the stranger represented in very unfavourable colours. He described him as a ruffian, capable of undertaking the darkest scenes of villany. He said his house was a repository of the most flagrant iniquities. That it contained fathers kidnapped by their children, wives confined by their husbands, gentlemen of fortune sequestered by their relations, and innocent persons immured by the malice of their adversaries. He affirmed this was his own case; and asked if our hero had never heard of Dick Distich, the poet and satirist. "Ben Bullock and I," said he, "were confident against the world in arms — did you never see his ode to me beginning with 'Fair blooming youth'? We were sworn brothers, admired and praised, and quoted each other, sir. We denounced war against all the world, actors, authors, and critics; and having drawn the sword, threw away

the scabbard — we pushed through thick and thin, hacked and hewed helter skelter, and became as formidable to the writers of the age as the Bœotian band of Thebes. My friend Bullock, indeed, was once rolled in the kennel; but soon

> He vig'rous rose, and from th' effluvia strong
> Imbib'd new life, and scour'd and stunk along.

Here is a satire, which I wrote in an alehouse when I was drunk — I can prove it by the evidence of the landlord and his wife; I fancy you 'll own I have some right to say with my friend Horace,

> Qui me commôrit, (melius non tangere clamo,)
> Flebit, et insignis tota cantabitur urbe."

The knight, having perused the papers, declared his opinion that the verses were tolerably good; but at the same time observed that the author had reviled as ignorant dunces several persons who had writ with reputation, and were generally allowed to have genius; a circumstance that would detract more from his candour than could be allowed to his capacity.

"D—n their genius!" cried the satirist, "a pack of impertinent rascals! I tell you, sir, Ben Bullock and I had determined to crush all that were not of our own party. Besides, I said before, this piece was written in drink." — "Was you drunk too when it was printed and published?" — "Yes, the printer shall make affidavit that I was never otherwise than drunk or maudlin, till my enemies, on pretence that my brain was turned, conveyed me to this infernal mansion" —

"They seem to have been your best friends," said the knight, "and have put the most tender interpretation on your conduct; for, waiving the plea of insanity, your character must stand as that of a man who hath some small share of genius, without an atom of integrity. Of all those whom Pope lashed in his Dunciad, there was not one who did not richly deserve the imputation of dulness, and every one of them had provoked the satirist by a personal attack. In this respect the English poet was much more honest than his French pattern Boileau, who stigmatised several men of acknowledged genius; such as Quinault, Perrault, and the celebrated Lulli; for which reason every man of a liberal turn must, in spite of all his poetical merit, despise him as a rancorous knave. If this disingenuous conduct cannot be forgiven in a writer of his superior genius, who will pardon it in you whose name is not half emerged from obscurity?"

"Hark ye, friend," replied the bard, "keep your pardon and your counsel for those who ask it; or, if you will force them upon people, take one piece of advice in return. If you don't like your present situation, apply for a committee without delay. They 'll find you too much of a fool to have the least tincture of madness; and you 'll be released without further scruple. In that case I shall rejoice in your deliverance; you will be freed from confinement, and I shall be happily deprived of your conversation."

So saying, he flew off at a tangent, and our knight could not help smiling at the peculiar virulence of his disposition. Sir Launcelot then endeavoured to

enter into conversation with his attendant, by asking how long Mr. Distich had resided in the house; but he might as well have addressed himself to a Turkish mute. The fellow either pretended ignorance, or refused an answer to every question that was proposed. He would not even disclose the name of his landlord, nor inform him whereabouts the house was situated.

Finding himself agitated with impatience and indignation, he returned to his apartment, and the door being locked upon him, began to review, not without horror, the particulars of his fate. "How little reason," said he to himself, "have we to boast of the blessings enjoyed by the British subject, if he holds them on such a precarious tenure; if a man of rank and property may be thus kidnapped even in the midst of the capital; if he may be seized by ruffians, insulted, robbed, and conveyed to such a prison as this, from which there seems to be no possibility of escape! Should I be indulged with pen, ink, and paper, and appeal to my relations, or to the magistrates of my country, my letters would be intercepted by those who superintend my confinement. Should I try to alarm the neighbourhood, my cries would be neglected as those of some unhappy lunatic under necessary correction. Should I employ the force which Heaven has lent me, I might imbrue my hands in blood, and after all find it impossible to escape through a number of successive doors, locks, bolts, and sentinels. Should I endeavour to tamper with the servant, he might discover my design, and then I should be abridged of the little

comfort I enjoy. People may inveigh against the Bastile in France, and the Inquisition in Portugal; but I would ask, if either of these be in reality so dangerous or dreadful as a private madhouse in England, under the direction of a ruffian? The Bastile is a state prison, the Inquisition is a spiritual tribunal; but both are under the direction of government. It seldom, if ever, happens that a man entirely innocent is confined in either; or, if he should, he lays his account with a legal trial before established judges. But, in England, the most innocent person upon earth is liable to be immured for life under the pretext of lunacy, sequestered from his wife, children, and friends, robbed of his fortune, deprived even of necessaries, and subjected to the most brutal treatment from a low-bred barbarian, who raises an ample fortune on the misery of his fellow-creatures, and may, during his whole life, practise this horrid oppression, without question or control."

This uncomfortable reverie was interrupted by a very unexpected sound that seemed to issue from the other side of a thick party-wall. It was a strain of vocal music, more plaintive than the widowed turtle's moan, more sweet and ravishing than Philomel's love-warbled song. Through his ear it instantly pierced into his heart; for at once he recognised it to be the voice of his adored Aurelia. Heavens! what was the agitation of his soul, when he made this discovery! how did every nerve quiver! how did his heart throb with the most violent emotion! he ran round the room in distraction, foaming like a

lion in the toil — then he placed his ear close to the partition, and listened as if his whole soul was exerted in his sense of hearing. When the sound ceased to vibrate on his ear, he threw himself on the bed; he groaned with anguish, he exclaimed in broken accents; and in all probability his heart would have burst, had not the violence of his sorrow found vent in a flood of tears.

These first transports were succeeded by a fit of impatience, which had well-nigh deprived him of his senses in good earnest. His surprise at finding his lost Aurelia in such a place, the seeming impossibility of relieving her, and his unspeakable eagerness to contrive some scheme for profiting by the interesting discovery he had made, concurred in brewing up a second ecstasy, during which he acted a thousand extravagances, which it was well for him the attendants did not observe. Perhaps it was well for the servant that he did not enter while the paroxysm prevailed. Had this been the case, he might have met with the fate of Lichas, whom Hercules in his frenzy destroyed.

Before the cloth was laid for supper, he was calm enough to conceal the disorder of his mind. But he complained of the headache, and desired he might be next day visited by the physician, to whom he resolved to explain himself in such a manner, as should make an impression upon him, provided he was not altogether destitute of conscience and humanity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE KNOT THAT PUZZLES HUMAN WISDOM, THE HAND OF FORTUNE SOMETIMES WILL UNTIE FAMILIAR AS HER GARTER.

WHEN the doctor made his next appearance in Sir Launcelot's apartment, the knight addressed him in these words: "Sir, the practice of medicine is one of the most honourable professions exercised among the sons of men; a profession which hath been revered at all periods, and in all nations, and even held sacred in the most polished ages of antiquity. The scope of it is to preserve the being, and confirm the health of our fellow-creatures; of consequence, to sustain the blessings of society, and crown life with fruition. The character of a physician, therefore, not only supposes natural sagacity, and acquired erudition, but it also implies every delicacy of sentiment, every tenderness of nature, and every virtue of humanity. That these qualities are centred in you, doctor, I would willingly believe. But it will be sufficient for my purpose, that you are possessed of common integrity. To whose concern I am indebted for your visits, you best know. But if you understand the art of medicine, you must be sensible by this time, that,

with respect to me, your prescriptions are altogether unnecessary.

"Come, sir, you cannot — you don't believe that my intellects are disordered. Yet, granting me to be really under the influence of that deplorable malady, no person has a right to treat me as a lunatic, or to sue out a commission, but my nearest kindred. — That you may not plead ignorance of my name and family, you shall understand that I am Sir Launcelot Greaves, of the county of York, Baronet; and that my nearest relation is Sir Reginald Meadows, of Cheshire, the eldest son of my mother's sister — that gentleman, I am sure, had no concern in seducing me by false pretences under the clouds of night into the fields, where I was surprised, overpowered, and kidnapped by armed ruffians. Had he really believed me insane, he would have proceeded according to the dictates of honour, humanity, and the laws of his country. Situated as I am, I have a right, by making application to the Lord Chancellor, to be tried by a jury of honest men. But of that right I cannot avail myself, while I remain at the mercy of a brutal miscreant, in whose house I am enclosed, unless you contribute your assistance. Your assistance, therefore, I demand, as you are a gentleman, a Christian, and a fellow-subject, who, though every other motive should be overlooked, ought to interest himself in my case as a common concern, and concur with all your power towards the punishment of those who dare commit such outrages against the liberty of your country."

The doctor seemed to be a little disconcerted; but, after some recollection, resumed his air of sufficiency

and importance, and assured our adventurer he would do him all the service in his power; but in the meantime advised him to take the potion he had prescribed.

The knight's eyes lightening with indignation, "I am now convinced," cried he, "that you are an accomplice in the villany which has been practised upon me; that you are a sordid wretch, without principle or feeling, a disgrace to the faculty, and a reproach to human nature — yes, sirrah, you are the most perfidious of all assassins — you are the hireling minister of the worst of all villains; who, from motives even baser than malice, envy, and revenge, rob the innocent of all the comforts of life, brand them with the imputation of madness, the most cruel species of slander, and wantonly protract their misery, by leaving them in the most shocking confinement, a prey to reflections infinitely more bitter than death — but I will be calm — do me justice at your peril. I demand the protection of the legislature — if I am refused — remember a day of reckoning will come — you and the rest of the miscreants who have combined against me, must, in order to cloak your treachery, have recourse to murder, — an expedient which I believe you very capable of embracing, — or a man of my rank and character cannot be much longer concealed. Tremble, caitiff, at the thoughts of my release — in the meantime, be gone, lest my just resentment impel me to dash your brains out upon that marble — away" —

The honest doctor was not so firmly persuaded of his patient's lunacy as to reject his advice, which he

made what haste he could to follow, when an unexpected accident intervened.

That this may be properly introduced, we must return to the knight's brace of trusty friends, Captain Crowe and lawyer Clarke, whom we left in sorrowful deliberation upon the fate of their patron. Clarke's genius being rather more fruitful in resources than that of the seaman, he suggested an advertisement, which was accordingly inserted in the daily papers; importing that, "Whereas a gentleman of considerable rank and fortune had suddenly disappeared, on such a night, from his house near Golden Square, in consequence of a letter delivered to him by a porter; and there is great reason to believe some violence hath been offered to his life; any person capable of giving such information as may tend to clear up this dark transaction, shall, by applying to Mr. Thomas Clarke, attorney, at his lodgings in Upper Brook Street, receive proper security for the reward of one hundred guineas, to be paid to him upon his making the discovery required."

The porter who delivered the letter appeared accordingly, but could give no other information, except that it was put into his hand with a shilling, by a man muffled up in a greatcoat, who stopped him for the purpose, in his passing through Queen Street. It was necessary that the advertisement should produce an effect upon another person, who was no other than the hackney-coachman who drove our hero to the place of his imprisonment. This fellow had been enjoined secrecy; and, indeed, bribed to hold his tongue, by a considerable gratification,

which, it was supposed, would have been effectual, as the man was a master coachman in good circumstances, and well known to the keeper of the madhouse, by whom he had been employed on former occasions of the same nature. Perhaps his fidelity to his employer, reinforced by the hope of many future jobs of that kind, might have been proof against the offer of fifty pounds; but double that sum was a temptation he could not resist. He no sooner read the intimation in the *Daily Advertiser*, over his morning's pot at an alehouse, than he entered into consultation with his own thoughts; and, having no reason to doubt that this was the very fare he had conveyed, he resolved to earn the reward, and abstain from all such adventures in time coming. He had the precaution, however, to take an attorney along with him to Mr. Clarke, who entered into a conditional bond; and, with the assistance of his uncle, deposited the money, to be forthcoming when the conditions should be fulfilled. These previous measures being taken, the coachman declared what he knew, and discovered the house in which Sir Launcelot had been immured. He, moreover, accompanied our two adherents to a judge's chamber, where he made oath to the truth of his information; and a warrant was immediately granted to search the house of Bernard Shackle, and set at liberty Sir Launcelot Greaves, if there found.

Fortified with this authority, they engaged a constable, with a formidable posse, and, embarking them in coaches, repaired with all possible expedition to the house of Mr. Shackle, who did not think proper

to dispute their claim, but admitted them, though not without betraying evident symptoms of consternation. One of the servants directing them, by his master's order, to Sir Launcelot's apartment, they hurried upstairs in a body, occasioning such a noise as did not fail to alarm the physician, who had just opened the door to retire, when he perceived their irruption. Captain Crowe conjecturing he was guilty from the confusion that appeared in his countenance, made no scruple of seizing him by the collar as he endeavoured to retreat; while the tender-hearted Tom Clarke, running up to the knight, with his eyes brimful of joy and affection, forgot all the forms of distant respect, and throwing his arms round his neck, blubbered in his bosom.

Our hero did not receive this proof of attachment unmoved. He strained him in his embrace, honoured him with the title of his deliverer, and asked him by what miracle he had discovered the place of his confinement. The lawyer began to unfold the various steps he had taken with equal minuteness and self-complacency, when Crowe, dragging the doctor still by the collar, shook his old friend by the hand, protesting he was never so overjoyed since he got clear of a Sallee rover on the coast of Barbary; and that two glasses ago he would have started all the money he had in the world in the hold of any man who would have shown Sir Launcelot safe at his moorings. The knight having made a proper return to this sincere manifestation of goodwill, desired him to dismiss that worthless fellow, meaning the

doctor; who, finding himself released, withdrew with some precipitation.

Then our adventurer, attended by his friends, walked off with a deliberate pace to the outward gate, which he found open, and getting into one of the coaches, was entertained by the way to his own house with a detail of every measure which had been pursued for his release.

In his own parlour he found Mrs. Dolly Cowslip, who had been waiting with great fear and impatience for the issue of Mr. Clarke's adventure. She now fell upon her knees, and bathed the knight's hands with tears of joy; while the face of this young woman, recalling the idea of her mistress, roused his heart to strong emotions, and stimulated his mind to the immediate achievement he had already planned. As for Mr. Crabshaw, he was not the last to signify his satisfaction at his master's return. After having kissed the hem of his garment, he retired to the stable, where he communicated these tidings to his friend Gilbert, whom he saddled and bridled; the same office he performed for Bronzomarte; then putting on his squire-like attire and accoutrements, he mounted one, and led the other to the knight's door, before which he paraded, uttering, from time to time, repeated shouts, to the no small entertainment of the populace, until he received orders to house his companions. Thus commanded, he led them back to their stalls, resumed his livery, and rejoined his fellow-servants, who were resolved to celebrate the day with banquets and rejoicings.

Their master's heart was not sufficiently at ease

to share in their festivity. He held a consultation with his friends in the parlour, whom he acquainted with the reasons he had to believe Miss Darnel was confined in the same house which had been his prison; a circumstance which filled them with equal pleasure and astonishment. Dolly in particular, weeping plentifully, conjured him to deliver her dear lady without delay. Nothing now remained but to concert the plan for her deliverance. As Aurelia had informed Dolly of her connexion with Mrs. Kawdle, at whose house she proposed to lodge, before she was overtaken on the road by her uncle, this particular was now imparted to the council, and struck a light which seemed to point out the direct way to Miss Darnel's enlargement.

Our hero, accompanied by Mrs. Cowslip and Tom Clarke, set out immediately for the house of Dr. Kawdle, who happened to be abroad, but his wife received them with great courtesy. She was a well-bred, sensible, genteel woman, and strongly attached to Aurelia by the ties of affection, as well as of consanguinity. She no sooner learned the situation of her cousin than she expressed the most impatient concern for her being set at liberty, and assured Sir Launcelot she would concur in any scheme he should propose for that purpose. There was no room for hesitation or choice; he attended her immediately to the judge, who, upon proper application, issued another search-warrant for Aurelia Darnel. The constable and his posse were again retained, and Sir Launcelot Greaves once more crossed the threshold of Mr. Bernard Shackle. Nor was the search-warrant

the only implement of justice with which he had furnished himself for this visit. In going thither they agreed upon the method in which they should introduce themselves gradually to Miss Darnel, that her tender nature might not be too much shocked by their sudden appearance.

When they arrived at the house, therefore, and produced their credentials, in consequence of which a female attendant was directed to show the lady's apartment, Mrs. Dolly first entered the chamber of the accomplished Aurelia, who, lifting up her eyes, screamed aloud, and flew into the arms of her faithful Cowslip. Some minutes elapsed before Dolly could make shift to exclaim, "Am coom to live and daai with my beloved leady!" — "Dear Dolly!" cried her mistress, "I cannot express the pleasure I have in seeing you again. Good Heaven! what solitary hours of keen affliction have I passed since we parted! — but, tell me, how did you discover the place of my retreat? — has my uncle relented? — do I owe your coming to his indulgence?"

Dolly answered in the negative; and by degrees gave her to understand that her cousin, Mrs. Kawdle, was in the next room; that lady immediately appeared, and a very tender scene of recognition passed between the two relations. It was she who, in the course of conversation, perceiving that Aurelia was perfectly composed, declared the happy tidings of her approaching deliverance. When the other eagerly insisted upon knowing to whose humanity and address she was indebted for this happy turn of fortune, her cousin declared the obligation was due

to a young gentleman of Yorkshire, called Sir Launcelot Greaves. At mention of that name her face was overspread with a crimson glow, and her eyes beamed redoubled splendour. "Cousin," said she, with a sigh, "I know not what to say — that gentleman, Sir Launcelot Greaves, was surely born — Lord bless me! I tell you, cousin, he has been my guardian angel."

Mrs. Kawdle, who had maintained a correspondence with her by letters, was no stranger to the former part of the connexion subsisting between those two lovers, and had always favoured the pretensions of our hero, without being acquainted with his person. She now observed with a smile, that as Aurelia esteemed the knight her guardian angel, and he adored her as a demi-deity, nature seemed to have intended them for each other; for such sublime ideas exalted them both above the sphere of ordinary mortals. She then ventured to intimate that he was in the house, impatient to pay his respects in person. At this declaration the colour vanished from her cheeks, which, however, soon underwent a total suffusion. Her heart panted, her bosom heaved, and her gentle frame was agitated by transports rather violent than unpleasing. She soon, however, recollected herself, and her native serenity returned; when, rising from her seat, she declared she would see him in the next apartment, where he stood in the most tumultuous suspense, waiting for permission to approach her person. Here she broke in upon him, arrayed in an elegant white undress, the emblem of her purity, beaming forth the emanations of amazing

beauty, warmed and improved with a glow of gratitude and affection. His heart was too big for utterance; he ran towards her with rapture, and throwing himself at her feet, imprinted a most respectful kiss upon her lily hand. — "This, divine Aurelia," cried he, "is a foretaste of that ineffable bliss which you was born to bestow! — Do I then live to see you smile again? to see you restored to liberty, your mind at ease, and your health unimpaired?" — "You have lived," said she, "to see my obligations to Sir Launcelot Greaves accumulated in such a manner, that a whole life spent in acknowledgment will scarce suffice to demonstrate a due sense of his goodness." — "You greatly overrate my services, which have been rather the duties of common humanity, than the efforts of a generous passion, too noble to be thus evinced; — but let not my unseasonable transports detain you a moment longer on this detested scene. Give me leave to hand you into the coach, and commit you to the care of this good lady, attended by this honest young gentleman, who is my particular friend." So saying, he presented Mr. Thomas Clarke, who had the honour to salute the fair hand of the ever-amiable Aurelia.

The ladies being safely coached under the escort of the lawyer, Sir Launcelot assured them he should wait on them in the evening at the house of Dr. Kawdle, whither they immediately directed their course. Our hero, who remained with the constable and his gang, inquired for Mr. Bernard Shackle, upon whose person he intended to serve a writ of conspiracy, over and above a prosecution for robbery, in

consequence of his having disencumbered the knight of his money and other effects, on the first night of his confinement. Mr. Shackle had discretion enough to avoid this encounter, and even to anticipate the indictment for felony, by directing one of his servants to restore the cash and papers, which our adventurer accordingly received before he quitted the house.

In the prosecution of his search after Shackle, he chanced to enter the chamber of the bard, whom he found in dishabille, writing at a table, with a bandage over one eye, and his head covered with a nightcap of baize. The knight, having made an apology for this intrusion, desired to know if he could be of any service to Mr. Distich, as he was now at liberty to use the little influence he had for the relief of his fellow-sufferers. — The poet having eyed him for some time askance, "I told you," said he, "your stay in this place would be of short duration. — I have sustained a small disaster on my left eye, from the hands of a rascally cordwainer, who pretends to believe himself the King of Prussia, and I am now in the very act of galling his majesty with keen iambics. — If you can help me to a roll of tobacco and a bottle of geneva, so; — if you are not so inclined, your humble servant, I shall share in the joy of your deliverance."

The knight declined gratifying him in these particulars, which he apprehended might be prejudicial to his health, but offered his assistance in redressing his grievances, provided he laboured under any cruel treatment or inconvenience. "I comprehend the full extent of your generosity," replied the satirist; "you

are willing to assist me in everything, except the only circumstances in which assistance is required — God b'w'ye — If you see Ben Bullock, tell him I wish he would not dedicate any more of his works to me. — D—n the fellow, he has changed his note, and begins to snivel. — For my part, I stick to my former maxim, defy all the world, and will die hard, even if death should be preceded by damnation."

The knight, finding him incorrigible, left him to the slender chance of being one day comforted by the dram-bottle; but resolved, if possible, to set on foot an accurate inquiry into the economy and transactions of this private inquisition, that ample justice might be done in favour of every injured individual confined within its walls.

In the afternoon he did not fail to visit his Aurelia; and all the protestations of their mutual passion were once more interchanged. He now produced the letter which had caused such fatal disquiet in his bosom; and Miss Darnel no sooner eyed the paper, than she recollected it was a formal dismission, which she had intended and directed for Mr. Sycamore. This the uncle had intercepted, and cunningly enclosed in another cover, addressed to Sir Launcelot Greaves, who was now astonished beyond measure to see the mystery so easily unfolded. The joy that now diffused itself in the hearts of our lovers, is more easily conceived than described; but, in order to give a stability to this mutual satisfaction, it was necessary that Aurelia should be secured from the tyranny of her uncle, whose power of guardianship would not otherwise expire for some months.

Dr. Kawdle and his lady having entered into their deliberations on the subject, it was agreed that Miss Darnel should have recourse to the protection of the Lord Chancellor; but such application was rendered unnecessary by the unexpected arrival of John Clump with the following letter to Mrs. Kawdle from the steward of Anthony Darnel, dated at Aurelia's house in the country: —

"MADAM, — It hath pleased God to afflict Mr. Darnel with a severe stroke of the dead palsy. — He was taken ill yesterday, and now lies insensible, seemingly at the point of death. Among the papers in his pocket I found the enclosed, by which it appears that my honoured young lady, Miss Darnel, is confined in a private madhouse. I am afraid Mr. Darnel's fate is a just judgment of God upon him for his cruelty to that excellent person. I need not exhort you, madam, to take, immediately upon the receipt of this, such measures as will be necessary for the enlargement of my poor young lady. In the meantime, I shall do the needful for the preservation of her property in this place, and send you an account of any further alteration that may happen; being very respectfully, madam, your most obedient humble servant, RALPH MATTOCKS."

Clump had posted up to London with this intimation on the wings of love, and being covered with clay from the heels to the eyes upwards, he appeared in such an unfavourable light at Dr. Kawdle's door, that the footman refused him admittance. Nevertheless, he pushed him aside, and fought his way upstairs into the dining-room, where the company was not a little astonished at such an apparition.

The fellow himself was no less amazed at seeing Aurelia and his own sweetheart Mrs. Dolly Cowslip. He forthwith fell upon his knees, and in silence held out the letter, which was taken by the doctor, and presented to his wife, according to the direction. She did not fail to communicate the contents, which were far from being unwelcome to the individuals who composed this little society. Mr. Clump was honoured with the approbation of his young lady, who commended him for his zeal and expedition; bestowed upon him a handsome gratuity in the meantime, and desired to see him again when he should be properly refreshed after the fatigue he had undergone.

Mr. Thomas Clarke being consulted on this occasion, gave it as his opinion, that Miss Darnel should, without delay, choose another guardian for the few months that remained of her minority. The opinion was confirmed by the advice of some eminent lawyers, to whom immediate recourse was had; and Dr. Kawdle being the person pitched upon for this office, the necessary forms were executed with all possible despatch.

The first use the doctor made of his guardianship was to sign a power, constituting Mr. Ralph Mattocks his attorney *pro tempore* for managing the estate of Miss Aurelia Darnel; and this was forwarded to the steward by the hands of Clump, who set out with it for the seat of Darnel Hill, though not without a heavy heart, occasioned by some intimation he had received concerning the connexion between his dear Dolly and Mr. Clarke, the lawyer.

CHAPTER THE LAST

WHICH, IT IS TO BE HOPED, WILL BE, ON MORE ACCOUNTS THAN ONE, AGREEABLE TO THE READER.

SIR LAUNCELOT, having vindicated the liberty, confirmed the safety, and secured the heart of his charming Aurelia, now found leisure to unravel the conspiracy which had been executed against his person; and with that view commenced a lawsuit against the owner of the house where he and his mistress had been separately confined. Mr. Shackle was, notwithstanding all the submissions and atonement which he offered to make, either in private or in public, indicted on the statute of kidnapping, tried, convicted, punished by a severe fine and standing in the pillory. A judicial writ *ad inquirendum* being executed, the prisons of his inquisition were laid open, and several innocent captives enlarged.

In the course of Shackle's trial, it appeared that the knight's confinement was a scheme executed by his rival Mr. Sycamore, according to the device of his counsellor, Dawdle, who, by this contrivance, had reconciled himself to his patron, after having deserted him in the day of battle. Our hero was so incensed at this discovery of Sycamore's treachery and ingratitude, that he went in quest of him immediately, to

take vengeance on his person, accompanied by Captain Crowe, who wanted to balance accounts with Mr. Dawdle. But those gentlemen had wisely avoided the impending storm, by retiring to the continent, on pretence of travelling for improvement.

Sir Launcelot was not now so much of a knight-errant as to leave Aurelia to the care of Providence, and pursue the traitors to the farthest extremities of the earth. He practised a much more easy, certain, and effectual method of revenge, by instituting a process against them, which, after writs of *capias*, *alias et pluries*, had been repeated, subjected them both to outlawry. Mr. Sycamore, and his friend, being thus deprived of the benefit of the law by their own neglect, would likewise have forfeited their goods and chattels to the King, had not they made such submissions as appeased the wrath of Sir Launcelot and Captain Crowe; then they ventured to return, and, by dint of interest, obtained a reversal of the outlawry. But this grace they did not enjoy till long after our adventurer was happily established in life.

While the knight waited impatiently for the expiration of Aurelia's minority, and in the meantime consoled himself with the imperfect happiness arising from her conversation, and those indulgences which the most unblemished virtue could bestow, Captain Crowe projected another plan of vengeance against the conjurer, whose lying oracles had cost him such a world of vexation. The truth is, the captain began to be tired of idleness, and undertook this adventure to keep his hand in use. He imparted his design to

Crabshaw, who had likewise suffered in spirit from the predictions of the said offender, and was extremely well disposed to assist in punishing the false prophet. He now took it for granted that he should not be hanged for stealing a horse; and thought it very hard to pay so much money for a deceitful prophecy, which, in all likelihood, would never be fulfilled.

Actuated by these motives, they set out together for the house of consultation, but they found it shut up and abandoned; and, upon inquiry in the neighbourhood, learned that the conjurer had moved his quarters that very day on which the captain had recourse to his art. This was actually the case. He knew the fate of Sir Launcelot would soon come to light, and he did not choose to wait the consequence. He had other motives for decamping. He had run a score at the public-house, which he had no mind to discharge, and wanted to disengage himself from his female associate, who knew too much of his affairs to be kept at a proper distance. All these purposes he had answered by retreating softly, without beat of drum, while his sibyl was abroad running down prey for his devouring. He had not, however, taken his measures so cunningly, but that this old hag discovered his new lodgings, and, in revenge, gave information to the publican. This creditor took out a writ accordingly, and the bailiff had just secured his person, as Captain Crowe and Timothy Crabshaw chanced to pass by the door in their way homewards, through an obscure street, near the Seven Dials.

The conjurer having no subterfuge left, but a great

many particular reasons for avoiding an explanation with the justice, like the man between the devil and the deep sea, of two evils chose the least; and beckoning to the captain, called him by his name. Crowe, thus addressed, replied with a "Hilloah!" and looking towards the place from whence he was hailed, at once recognised the necromancer. Without farther hesitation, he sprang across the street, and, collaring Albumazar, exclaimed, "Aha! old boy, is the wind in that corner? I thought we should grapple one day — now will I bring you up by the head, though all the devils in hell were blowing abaft the beam."

The bailiff seeing his prisoner so roughly handled before, and at the same time assaulted behind by Crabshaw, who cried, "Show me a liar, and I'll show you a thief — who is to be hanged now?" I say, the bailiff, fearing he should lose the benefit of his job, began to put on his contentious face, and, declaring the doctor was his prisoner, swore he could not surrender him without a warrant from the Lord Chief Justice. The whole group adjourning into the parlour, the conjurer desired to know of Crowe whether Sir Launcelot was found. Being answered, "Ey, ey, safe enough to see you made fast in the bilboes, brother"; he told the captain he had something of consequence to communicate for his advantage; and proposed that Crowe and Crabshaw should bail the action, which lay only for a debt of three pounds.

Crowe stormed, and Crabshaw grinned at this modest proposal; but when they understood that they could only be bound for his appearance, and

reflected that they need not part with him until his body should be surrendered unto justice, they consented to give bail; and the bond being executed, conveyed him directly to the house of our adventurer.

The boisterous Crowe introduced him to Sir Launcelot with such an abrupt unconnected detail of his offence, as the knight could not understand without Timothy's annotations. These were followed by some questions put to the conjurer, who, laying aside his black gown, and plucking off his white beard, exhibited to the astonished spectators the very individual countenance of the empirical politician Ferret, who had played our hero such a slippery trick after the electioneering adventure.

"I perceive," said he, "you are preparing to expostulate, and upbraid me for having given a false information against you to the country justice. I look upon mankind to be in a state of nature; a truth, which Hobbes has stumbled upon by accident. I think every man has a right to avail himself of his talents, even at the expense of his fellow-creatures; just as we see the fish, and other animals of the creation, devouring one another. I found the justice but one degree removed from idiotism, and knowing that he would commit some blunder in the execution of his office, which would lay him at your mercy, I contrived to make his folly the instrument of my escape — I was dismissed without being obliged to sign the information I had given; and you took ample vengeance for his tyranny and impertinence. I came to London, where my circumstances obliged me to live in disguise. In the character of a conjurer, I was

consulted by your follower, Crowe, and your squire, Crabshaw. I did little or nothing but echo back the intelligence they brought me, except prognosticating that Crabshaw would be hanged; a prediction to which I found myself so irresistibly impelled, that I am persuaded it was the real effect of inspiration. I am now arrested for a paltry sum of money, and, moreover, liable to be sent to Bridewell as an impostor; let those answer for my conduct whose cruelty and insolence have driven me to the necessity of using such subterfuges. I have been oppressed and persecuted by the government for speaking truth; your omnipotent laws have reconciled contradictions. That which is acknowledged to be truth in fact, is construed falsehood in law; and great reason we have to boast of a constitution founded on the basis of absurdity. But, waiving these remarks, I own I am unwilling to be either imprisoned for debt, or punished for imposture. I know how far to depend upon generosity, and what is called benevolence — words to amuse the weak-minded; I build upon a surer bottom. I will bargain for your assistance. It is in my power to put twelve thousand pounds in the pocket of Samuel Crowe, that there sea-ruffian, who, by his goodwill, would hang me to the yard's arm" —

There he was interrupted by the seaman. "D—n your rat's eyes! none of your — hang thee! fish my top-masts! if the rope was fairly reeved, and the tackle sound, d'ye see" — Mr. Clarke, who was present, began to stare, while the knight assured Ferret, that if he was really able and willing to serve

Captain Crowe in anything essential, he should be amply rewarded. In the meantime he discharged the debt, and assigned him an apartment in his own house. That same day Crowe, by the advice of Sir Launcelot and his nephew, entered into conditional articles with the cynic, to allow him the interest of fifteen hundred pounds for life, provided by this means the captain should obtain possession of the estate of Hobby Hole in Yorkshire, which had belonged to his grandfather, and of which he was heir of blood.

This bond being executed, Mr. Ferret discovered that he himself was the lawful husband of Bridget Maple, aunt to Samuel Crowe, by a clandestine marriage; which, however, he convinced them he could prove by undeniable evidence. This being the case, she, the said Bridget Maple, alias Ferret, was a *covert femme*, consequently could not transact any deed of alienation without his concurrence; ergo, the docking of the entail of the estate of Hobby Hole was illegal and of none effect. This was a very agreeable declaration to the whole company, who did not fail to congratulate Captain Crowe on the prospect of his being restored to his inheritance. Tom Clarke, in particular, protested, with tears in his eyes, that it gave him unspeakable joy; and his tears trickled the faster, when Crowe, with an arch look, signified, that now he was pretty well victualled for life, he had some thoughts of embarking on the voyage of matrimony.

But that point of happiness to which, as the north pole, the course of these adventures hath been invariably directed, was still unattained; we mean, the

indissoluble union of the accomplished Sir Launcelot Greaves and the enchanting Miss Darnel. Our hero now discovered in his mistress a thousand charms, which hitherto he had no opportunity to contemplate. He found her beauty excelled by her good sense, and her virtue superior to both. He found her untainted by that giddiness, vanity, and affectation, which distinguish the fashionable females of the present age. He found her uninfected by the rage for diversion and dissipation; for noise, tumult, gewgaws, glitter, and extravagance. He found her not only raised by understanding and taste far above the amusement of little vulgar minds; but even exalted by uncommon genius and refined reflection, so as to relish the more sublime enjoyments of rational pleasure. He found her possessed of that vigour of mind which constitutes true fortitude, and vindicates the empire of reason. He found her heart incapable of disguise or dissimulation; frank, generous, and open; susceptible of the most tender impressions; glowing with a keen sense of honour, and melting with humanity. A youth of his sensibility could not fail of being deeply affected by such attractions. The nearer he approached the centre of happiness, the more did the velocity of his passion increase. Her uncle still remained insensible as it were in the arms of death. Time seemed to linger in its lapse, till the knight was inflamed to the most eager degree of impatience. He communicated his distress to Aurelia; he pressed her with the most pathetic remonstrances to abridge the torture of his suspense. He interested Mrs. Kawdle in his behalf; and, at length, his importunities succeeded. The

banns of marriage were regularly published, and the ceremony was performed in the parish church, in the presence of Dr. Kawdle and his lady, Captain Crowe, Lawyer Clarke, and Mrs. Dolly Cowslip.

The bride, instead of being disguised in tawdry stuffs of gold and silver, and sweating under a harness of diamonds, according to the elegant taste of the times, appeared in a negligee of plain blue satin, without any other jewels than her eyes, which far outshone all that ever was produced by the mines of Golconda. Her hair had no other extraneous ornament than a small sprig of artificial roses; but the dignity of her air, the elegance of her shape, the sweetness and sensibility of her countenance, added to such warmth of colouring, and such exquisite symmetry of features, as could not be excelled by human nature, attracted the eyes and excited the admiration of all the beholders. The effect they produced in the heart of Sir Launcelot was such a rapture as we cannot pretend to describe. He made his appearance on this occasion in a white coat and blue satin vest, both embroidered with silver; and all who saw him could not but own that he alone seemed worthy to possess the lady whom Heaven had destined for his consort. Captain Crowe had taken off a blue suit of clothes strongly guarded with bars of broad gold-lace, in order to honour the nuptials of his friend. He wore upon his head a bag-wig, *à la pigeon*, made by an old acquaintance in Wapping; and to his side he had girded a huge plate-hilted sword, which he had bought of a recruiting serjeant. Mr. Clarke was dressed in pompadour,

with gold buttons; and his lovely Dolly in a smart checked lutestring, a present from her mistress.

The whole company dined, by invitation, at the house of Dr. Kawdle; and here it was that the most deserving lovers on the face of the earth attained to the consummation of all earthly felicity. The captain and his nephew had a hint to retire in due time. Mrs. Kawdle conducted the amiable Aurelia, trembling, to the marriage-bed; our hero, glowing with a bridegroom's ardour, claimed the husband's privilege. Hymen lighted up his brightest torch at Virtue's lamp, and every star shed its happiest influence on their Heaven-directed union.

Instructions had been already despatched to prepare Greavesbury Hall for the reception of its new mistress; and for that place the new-married couple set out next morning, according to the plan which had been previously concerted. Sir Launcelot and Lady Greaves, accompanied by Mrs. Kawdle and attended by Dolly, travelled in their own coach, drawn by six dappled horses. Dr. Kawdle, with Captain Crowe, occupied the doctor's post-chariot, provided with four bays. Mr. Clarke had the honour to bestride the loins of Bronzomarte. Mr. Ferret was mounted upon an old hunter; Crabshaw stuck close to his friend Gilbert; and two other horsemen completed the retinue. There was not an aching heart in the whole cavalcade, except that of the young lawyer, which was by turns invaded with hot desires and chilling scruples. Though he was fond of Dolly to distraction, his regard to worldly reputation, and his attention to worldly interest, were continually

raising up bars to a legal gratification of his love. His pride was startled at the thought of marrying the daughter of a poor country publican; and he moreover dreaded the resentment of his uncle Crowe, should he take any step of this nature without his concurrence. Many a wishful look did he cast at Dolly, the tears standing in his eyes, and many a woful sigh did he utter.

Lady Greaves immediately perceived the situation of his heart, and, by questioning Mrs. Cowslip, discovered a mutual passion between these lovers. She consulted her dear knight on the subject, and he catechised the lawyer, who pleaded guilty. The captain being sounded as to his opinion, declared he would be steered in that, as well as every other course of life, by Sir Launcelot and his lady, whom he verily revered as being of an order superior to the ordinary race of mankind. This favourable response being obtained from the sailor, our hero took an opportunity on the road, one day after dinner, in presence of the whole company, to accost the lawyer in these words: — "My good friend Clarke, I have your happiness very much at heart — your father was an honest man, to whom my family had manifold obligations. I have had these many years a personal regard for yourself, derived from your own integrity of heart and goodness of disposition — I see you are affected, and shall be brief — Besides this regard, I am indebted to your friendship for the liberty — what shall I say? — for the inestimable happiness I now enjoy, in possessing the most excellent — But I understand that significant glance of my Aurelia — I will not offend her

delicacy — The truth is, my obligation is very great, and it is time I should evince my gratitude — If the stewardship of my estate is worth your acceptance, you shall have it immediately, together with the house and farm of Cockerton in my neighbourhood. I know you have a passion for Mrs. Dolly; and believe she looks upon you with the eyes of tender prepossession — don't blush, Dolly — Besides your agreeable person, which all the world must approve, you can boast of virtue, fidelity, and friendship. Your attachment to Lady Greaves neither she nor I shall ever forget — If you are willing to unite your fate with Mr. Clarke, your mistress gives me leave to assure you she will stock the farm at her own expense, and we will celebrate the wedding at Greavesbury Hall" —

By this time the hearts of these grateful lovers had overflowed. Dolly was sitting on her knees, bathing her lady's hand with her tears, and Mr. Clarke appeared in the same attitude by Sir Launcelot. The uncle, almost as affected as the nephew by the generosity of our adventurer, cried aloud, "I pray God that you and your glorious consort may have smooth seas and gentle gales whithersoever you are bound; as for my kinsman Tom, I'll give him a thousand pounds to set him fairly afloat; and if he prove not a faithful tender to you his benefactor, I hope he will founder in this world, and be damned in that which is to come." Nothing now was wanting to the completion of their happiness but the consent of Dolly's mother at the Black Lion, who they did not suppose could have any objection to such an advantageous

match for her daughter; but in this particular they were mistaken.

In the meantime they arrived at the village where the knight had exercised the duties of chivalry; and there he received the gratulation of Mr. Fillet and the attorney who had offered to bail him before Justice Gobble. Mutual civilities having passed, they gave him to understand that Gobble and his wife were turned Methodists. All the rest of the prisoners whom he had delivered came to testify their gratitude, and were hospitably entertained. Next day they halted at the Black Lion, where the good woman was overjoyed to see Dolly so happily preferred; but when Sir Launcelot unfolded the proposed marriage, she interrupted him with a scream — "Christ Jesus forbid — marry and amen! — match with her own brother!"

At this exclamation Dolly fainted; her lover stood with his ears erect, and his mouth wide open; Crowe stared, while the knight and his lady expressed equal surprise and concern. When Sir Launcelot entreated Mrs. Cowslip to explain this mystery, she told him, that about sixteen years ago, Mr. Clarke, senior, had brought Dolly, then an infant, to her house, when she and her late husband lived in another part of the country; and as she had then been lately delivered of a child which did not live, he hired her as a nurse to the little foundling. He owned she was a love-begotten babe, and from time to time paid handsomely for the board of Dolly, who he desired might pass for her own daughter. In his last illness, he assured her he had taken care to provide for the

child; but since his death she had received no account of any such provision. She moreover informed his honour, that Mr. Clarke had deposited in her hands a diamond ring, and a sealed paper, never to be opened without his order, until Dolly should be demanded in marriage by the man she should like, and not then, except in the presence of the clergyman of the parish. "Send for the clergyman this instant," cried our hero, reddening, and fixing his eyes on Dolly; "I hope all will yet be well."

The vicar arriving, and being made acquainted with the nature of the case, the landlady produced the paper; which, being opened, appeared to be an authentic certificate, that the person commonly known by the name of Dorothy Cowslip, was in fact Dorothy Greaves, daughter of Jonathan Greaves, Esq., by a young gentlewoman who had been some years deceased.

"The remaining part of the mystery I myself can unfold," exclaimed the knight, while he ran and embraced the astonished Dolly as his kinswoman. "Jonathan Greaves was my uncle, and died before he came of age, so that he could make no settlement on his child, the fruit of a private amour, founded on a promise of marriage, of which this ring was a token. Mr. Clarke, being his confidant, disposed of the child, and at length, finding his constitution decay, revealed the secret to my father, who in his will bequeathed one hundred pounds a year to this agreeable foundling; but, as they both died while I was abroad, and some of the memorandums touching this transaction probably were mislaid, I never till

now could discover where or how my pretty cousin was situated. I shall recompense the good woman for her care and fidelity, and take pleasure in bringing this affair to a happy issue."

The lovers were now overwhelmed with transports of joy and gratitude, and every countenance was lighted up with satisfaction. From this place to the habitation of Sir Launcelot, the bells were rung in every parish, and the corporation in their formalities congratulated him in every town through which he passed. About five miles from Greavesbury Hall he was met by above five thousand persons of both sexes and every age, dressed out in their gayest apparel, headed by Mr. Ralph Mattocks from Darnel Hill, and the rector from the knight's own parish. They were preceded by music of different kinds, ranged under a great variety of flags and ensigns; and the women, as well as the men, bedizened with fancy knots and marriage favours. At the end of the avenue, a select bevy of comely virgins arrayed in white, and a separate band of choice youths distinguished by garlands of laurel and holly interweaved, fell into the procession, and sung in chorus a rustic epithalamium composed by the curate. At the gate they were received by the venerable housekeeper, Mrs. Oakley, whose features were so brightened by the occasion, that with the first glance she made a conquest of the heart of Captain Crowe; and this connexion was improved afterwards into a legal conjunction.

Meanwhile the houses of Greavesbury Hall and Darnel Hill were set open for the entertainment

of all-comers, and both echoed with the sounds of festivity. After the ceremony of giving and receiving visits had been performed by Sir Launcelot Greaves and his lady, Mr. Clarke was honoured with the hand of the agreeable Miss Dolly Greaves; and the captain was put in possession of his paternal estate. The perfect and uninterrupted felicity of the knight and his endearing consort, diffused itself through the whole adjacent country, as far as their example and influence could extend. They were admired, esteemed, and applauded by every person of taste, sentiment, and benevolence; at the same time beloved, revered, and almost adored by the common people, among whom they suffered not the merciless hand of indigence or misery to seize one single sacrifice.

Ferret, at first, seemed to enjoy his easy circumstances; but the novelty of this situation soon wore off, and all his misanthropy returned. He could not bear to see his fellow-creatures happy around him, and signified his disgust to Sir Launcelot, declaring his intention of returning to the metropolis, where he knew there would be always food sufficient for the ravenous appetite of his spleen. Before he departed, the knight made him partake of his bounty, though he could not make him taste of his happiness, which soon received a considerable addition in the birth of a son, destined to be the heir and representative of two worthy families, whose mutual animosity the union of his parents had so happily extinguished.

THE END.

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